1. Poetry, American.

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THEBES

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

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THIS POEM

IS

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

TO MY

BELOVED AND HONORED

FATHER.

CONTENTS.

THEBES.

THEBES.

A POEM TO ITS RISE AND FALL.

PART I.

ALONG the shore, a gorgeous dream,
Towers Thebes above the stream;
The noble Nile, wide and smooth,
Reflects the city in its youth:
A city formed and cut in stone,
Which once piled up the mountain's throne,
On which the aged snows did rest,—
A coronet of tinted East!
Titanic temples loom and gleam
In the air, and in the stream,
And Time appears to stand him still
Before the vision, as if a spell
Stayed his wings and stopped his sand
From timing the end of such a land!
A land where even Death lies tombed,
As grand as when in life men loomed
Up to clouds their temple's might,
To show the stars their human light!
High columns in an endless range,
From verdurous groves of orange,

Rise them stately to the sky,
Like porphyry in beauty!
With alabaster domes upholding,
Arch on arch of dazzled stone
Fairly lead up to the sun!
And seem to lie upon the clouds
Like rainbows or the wings of birds!
Colonnades that circle 'round
Huge temples resting on the ground,—
So vast it seems the mountains fall
Beside them into hillocks small!
The avenues before the doors
Of temples fronting on the shores
Stretch them, lined with statues to
Every fancy poets know;
But like Venus, sculptured pure,
Whisper fancy something more!
Through the streets the charger paws,
With its rider decked for wars!
The mighty monarch, by his queen,
Dressed with emblems of his reign;
The rich-robed priests; the ladies of
The inner courts of tropic love,—
A multitude, whose regal dress
Adds to the city's gorgeousness.
The river flows and bluey sleeps
Between long flights of marble steps,
On which the bathers resting see
Their images within the sky,
Mirrored in the water's face,
Like a painting framed in space!

The blossomed maidens dancing down,
Leave a perfume in the sun,
As they throw their meshy hair
To the golden, balmy air!
Wondrous temples massively
Stand, guarded by the Deity,—
Shaped as beasts, with human heads,
Carved upon great granite beds;
Columns, on whose dizzy top
Rise the monarchs stately up,
Who ruled to make the sun look small
Within the flamy-flowered hall!
Who took the treasures of the earth
To give them new and speaking birth;
Who made great Thebes against the East
Look as if two suns had kissed,
To break upon the world a light—
Like some princess's nuptial night!
Oases of all human splendor!
Home of Karnak and of Luxor,
Whose monoliths, colossal, bold,
Stand out beneath the sky like gold!
Land of obelisk and sphinx,
Where age fair youth's elixir drinks;
Where Osiris seems to give
Powers only to make live!
Oh, mighty Thebes! can Time pull down
Thy world of marbles in the sun?
What evil spirit could come near
To whisper death in that sweet air,
Which floats as morning over thee
To make each statue move with joy?

The joy of being, as thou art,
A city after man's own heart!

Before the arc of the setting sun
The funeral of Osiris, one
Of Egypt's mightiest deities,
Passes slow to melodies
Of the tambourine and flute,
And the sistrum, harp, and lute;
The daughters of the king and queen,
With vestal lovely maiden mien,
In robes of blue, bear vases full
Of flowers fresh and beautiful;
Priests, half clothed in leopard's hide,
Bear the boat,* while, side by side,
Those who hold aloft a pole,
On which the hawk and grim jackal
Stand for emblems to the soul.
Along the porches, looming high
Their cornices against the sky,
Winds the cortege to a shrine,
Where dancers meet them, bringing wine
And ointment for their offerings;
Then the vestal virgin sings
An epicede that echoes far
Through the temple to the star
Of the evening being born,—
A leaf from some red flower blown

* The boat was emblematic of the crossing of the river (or lake) to the unseen world. This description of a funeral ceremony in honor of Osiris is literal, as it is introduced on one of the tombs at Thebes.

In the roseries of the sky,
Whose gardener is the Deity!
They pray for peace and victory
Upon the borders of the sea
That ripples to the foliose shore,
Where their people are at war
Against the Mesopotamians,
Whose fortress, Kadesh, rears the sons
Who live to rule great Eastern realms
Of Asia's land of gold, and dreams!

The maidens to their soft guitars
Sing plaintive odes unto the stars,
As beside the river's flow
They frighten off some god of woe
By calling on Apollo's name,
To give them each a happy dream.
Sing they of some lover gone
To the war, in the early morn
Of loving in this lovely world!
As the sun goes down in a cloud of gold,
The heavens spread with an opal's glare,
Then shades to blue, they dimly hear
The tinkle of the sheep's soft bells
Afar in the vine- and orange-dells.
And the god seems pleased, as the balmy air
Brightens with the glittering star!
Unto the temple now they stroll,
Singing low and lovable;
They push the heavy curtains by
That hang in the holy doorway,

And join the priests and dancers there
Kneeling solemnly in prayer.

Now the stars in euphony
Shine through the endlessness of sky,
Gleam aerial and goldenly;
With their colors in a trance,
They a tender blessing glance;
Triumphantly they blaze afar,
Greeting Thebes, a fellow-star!
Lolling in the tropic air,
Look they on her debonair,
Comparing her to one vast city,
One abode of space-bound beauty,—
Beauty they forever view
Far up their world-lit avenue,
To which they ever give their light,
From which they floated into night:
Pendant now the lightsome dreams
Of the Unknown sleeping realms!
And their verdict seems to be
That, as a bird of plumage gay
Hides from earth the flaming sun,
So fair Thebes hides heaven's morn,—
Hides it with her dream of gold,
To fall at last, for, behold!
The bird at last falls dead, and cold!

A gala day! a war is over,
And through the streets of Thebes the soldier

Marches stately, proud, and grand !—
Treads the earth to own the land !
The sky is blue and breezy bright ;
The world is jubilant with light !
A glorious day for glory's show,
Spanned by Nature's lovely bow !
After storms of conflict long,
Peace has dawn in feastful song.
On the vast procession comes,
With cymbals, harps, and low-toned drums,
From a conquest far in Asia,
Fit to light the tomb's dark brazier
For Great Menus to behold
With delight fair Egypt's gold !
Through the mighty avenue
Of the sphinxes, grand, and new,
Stretching out a mile or more,
March the men from years of war.
The high-priest leads the king in state
To the palace-temple's gate,
That he may offer up the flame
Which thanks the gods for Egypt's fame.
In a gleaming chariot sits,
Surrounded by his bravest knights,
The godful king, Rameses III.,
Who moves along without a word,
Yet speaking well the pomp, and state
In the brow and body straight,
And the robes of royalty,
Befitting noble majesty !
Men have fallen, thunders rolled,
Even when his might was told !

Shining in his country's name,
As shines in night a steadfast flame!
Victory's king, crowned by battle,
Crowned by all his conquering people!
From his car he glances grand;
Sent by Isis to command!
Men encased in jewelled armor
March them stern with strength and valor,—
Mighty men, who kept their breath
When armies bit the dust in death!
Men of Thebes, who love her glory,
And now march home with victory!
To lay their swords upon the altar,—
Proud they fought for her together!
Priests, who bear the ark and palm,
Swinging censers with their psalm;
Archers treading like one man;
Royal knights with the royal fan;
Sacks of gold on many asses,
Flocks of lambs for sacrifices;
Girls bearing yellow corn,
Brilliant as the tinted morn;
Men in lion-skins, with banners;
Slaves with plumes of peacock-feathers;
Golden chariots, horses prancing,
Virgins draped in crimson dancing;
Salvers heaped with lotus flowers,
Falling to the ground in showers,
Mingling with the flying hair
Of women holding them to air.
Half-robed damsels, wild with pleasure!
Bearing jewels, priceless treasure,

High above their heads in caskets;
Others with ripe grapes in baskets,—
Tropic girls of Egypt, warm,
Showing 'bove the waist each charm;
Their ankles ringed beneath short dresses,
Olive-skinned, with raven tresses.
Little children, laughing, jumping,
By their mother's side; she, loving,
Follows near her husband proud,—
The grandest soldier in the crowd!
Sistrums, bright as sunlight, ringing;
Rows of slaves, with long chains clanking,—
Iron chains,—their heads down, thinking!
Valiant men in one long column,
Shieldless, songless, walking solemn!
Droves of camels, gleaming spears,
Laughter, joy, and hidden tears!
Ponderous elephants coming slow,
Who drag *their* chains and seem to know!
Goats, and droves of captured steeds,—
The rarest of the captives' breeds;
Bleating sheep, and oxen tame,
Then the people, who exclaim:
Long live Rameses! may his reign
Ever be great Egypt's gain!
Loud the trumpets' blast, and long,
That answers to the people's song!

Night comes on, the pageant ends,
And now fair Thebes new joy spends:
Festive boards and brimming glasses,
Bearded heads, and smooth young faces;

Rose-bud lips 'neath woman's eyes,
Wanton loves and holy joys!
Breathed in airs melodious,
Dreamy, soft, and slumberous;
Merry men, whose eyes with wine
Half close them with a worldly sign;
Others in quiet homes of bliss
Receive the longed-for meeting kiss!
Glittering temples, where the eye
Sees naught but lustrous beauty;
Ceilings painted with the dreams
That float among the ravish gleams
Falling from the torch of love
Burning in a tulip-grove!
Violet hangings fringed with gold,
Couches whose soft depths enfold
Nymphets resting from the dance,
Dreaming of a wild romance!
Tall, lithe braziers red with flame,
Great maned lions strolling tame,
Ghoul-like shadows on the floor,
From heaps of armor stained in war!

In rooms where feasting mingles love,
Gigantic centaurs loom above,
Crowned like gods unto a fate,
That Thebes with glory is complete!
They give a grandeur to the soul,
And woman, lolling beautiful,
Seems their goddess ripe with charms,—
Which blend with power as her arms

Urge the spell-bound, yearning mind
Up vast heights its love to find!
Heights of splendor, where the sense
Touches strange magnificence!
All the shapes of imagery,
Carved in lines of beauty,
Every hue with light, and shade,—
All that man has ever made!
Odors from the wings of spring,
Midnight lamps' soft flickering
Through wavy waves of melody,
Sad with subtile sympathy.—
All with sweet illecebrous
Offer Future's splendrous!
Life and wealth with passion meet,
The world's best art is at the feet
Of men who drink [they scoff to sip]
The nectar from Love's vermeil lip:
Gazing on young loveliness
In woman's form of perfectness,
Which, as part of all they see,
Is part from her desire for joy!
Love which answers with its face
Of ravish beauty for one kiss,
To build like dreams from out like air,
Where moon and stars gleam so fair;
In which is felt the mystery
Of marvellous meanings in the sky!—
Meanings which seem best express
Their vast extent and wonderfulness
In ethereal realms of eyes,
Visioning the soul's bright skies;

For beyond the substance here
Of mere bodies strangely fair
There appeals an essence pure,
Such as lights a sweet-faced star!
This, as spirit, moulds a sense
Of its own intelligence,
Which assumes the sad and gay
For the loving of each day,
While in fancy's robes it plays
As Aurora in the skies,—
Dropping flowers, drying tears,
Giving life those pleasure-years
That do pass to bring men love
And the godlike spirit prove
In the life as soul divine;
Yet speaking with such glamour-sign,
That mortals ever ask to see
The future of their entity!
'Tis naught to say that spirits seem,—
That all the world is like a dream:
The simple words do but express
A meaning that is meaningless!

On a bed of vast romance
Imagination lies in trance
When we live within the airs,
Ruling fancy's hemispheres,—
Taking all the flowered earth
For a mouth of ravish birth,
Whose superhuman lips sweet full
To meet at every turn the soul,

While we, with feelings of delices,
Return fair Nature all her kisses!
In the moonlight and the star,
In the moving, unseen air,—
And things about us like a prayer,
Must we find a strange delight,
Which, moulded to the mind's gold light,
Creates a sphere of spirit-lines,
Whose contour shows in actual signs
The loveliness of human things,
Flying with celestial wings!
In this world 'tis sweet to dream;
There's nothing that has not a limb
Incarnate with a blushy will
To enfold us for earth's spell:
The skies do not a mirage move
Of pictures painted by our love,
But an aureole of air,
Scented like a woman's hair,
Which, when we breathe its spirit-soul,
Falls o'er us, warm and beautiful!
For, behold, when earth so seems,
We're touching one who feels our dreams!
Ambition, too, speaks in this world
Of universal fancy mould;
Every passion which we know
Revels in this world to grow.
'Tis well to watch our passions, though,
For in this world they tropic grow,
And every thought of all we feel
At last to love does shyly steal!

A world of angels in a world
Of the fairest earthly mould,
Spirits, that resemble all
The beauty of the tangible,—
Such appear to ever be
The human form in unity
With the pretty world we see!
When through love of maids we wake
The spirits, and, caressing, take
Her carnal beauty to our breast,
Angels seem to flutter kissed!
They crowd them on the peachy cheek,
To play as blushes o'er the neck,
And hide and gleam with perfumed wings
In her hair, and use ear-rings
For little frames to show their faces,
Smiling, winning, full of graces!
When the crimson lips complete
The intercourse of spirits sweet,
No more the body seems to be
Holding what we cannot see,
But a form all lovable,
Like the dreams that in it dwell;
Then the color of the eyes
Spreads a realm of summer skies,
In which the earth ascends to find
The lovely fancies of the mind!—
Ascends to where life's beauteous Being
Mingles for perpetual feeling
Of the truth of love's sweet dreaming!
This is loving;—this is blood
Running over out to God!

Yet no vision of His might
We get us even in this light:
Still, in heavens love communes,
Surrounded by material suns!
Take all away, and love would die
If dependent on its sky!
The universal presence seems
Only able to give dreams,
And Divinity alone
Appears embodied in the sun,
Whose light as spirit seems His own?
Through the ages of the All
Passes, growing, life's *one* soul!
Grander, and more lovely grand,
As the beauty in the land
Of the far eternal spheres,
Seems increases with the years!
If there be a God supreme,
Such as *now* the human dream,
We can know Him only by
The laws of all in unity!
For, apart of All—He is—
Supremest where the worlds are His
Grown to their perfect state,
Of power in them to create!
But where the light of such a place
Spreads its bliss within vast space,
We no more can apprehend
Than the ant can comprehend
That the plain he crawls upon
Is a globe, and that a sun,

A hundred times in size to it,
Allows him life and sense of sight.
Of that Spirit, of that King
Of worlds, we feel through dreaming;
No fancy born of even love
Can conceive mid stars above!

The astral realms of radial light
With these dreamers' eyes unite,
For that consciousness which dwells
In those strange and awful spells,
Which charmed from matter's vital forms,
Are known life's material charms!
In such thought fair love is fairest,
And appears to mean the dearest
Essence of an essence known,—
As we know a song's sweet tone
Coming o'er a boundless sea
From a land of mystery!
The Future's long, dim, misty way,
Half lighted by the sympathy
They feel for all forever hid,
Seems to circle 'round the maid,
A tenderness of dreamful light,
Like twilights full of sad delight!
No thought of grave may last it long
If mingled with youth's happy song,
But while lost in life's supreme
Music, singing out its dream,
A little of the light of spheres
That must come to spirit-years

Blends a tender melody,
Making love's sweet symphony
More divine, and truly real
To all their senses thrilling feel!
Hammocks woven by the fancy
Hold them swinging in the sky,
Fastened to high trees, which shoot
The many stars, and take their root
In the springful, tropic ground
Of the earth all lovely round!
The birds that fly among their boughs
Are the arching rainbows,
Coming with each storm and shower
To the starry trees in flower!
Their pleasures are of every kind,
Enjoyed through a poet's mind,
Loving beauty and the grand.
If passion in such mental land
Should ever grow supreme, how great
Would be its blinding, tropic light!
How fierce its winds would fall, and rise,
Where all is like some Paradise!

Like hashish, which gives life to things
Inanimate, to give them wings
For heavens, where we feel the soul
As one with them and one with all:
So surroundings ever seem
To those whose life is one real dream!
In the mind they see vast Edens,
To find like gardens in earth's heavens!

Every wish that fancy bears
Before their very eyes appears,
Because the beauty of the world
Is fair enough to always fold
Such attributes as dreams do frame
About its poetized real name!
No wonder all they see is fair,
And that their spirits in the air
Seem to mingle with the spheres,—
Walk them in the amber stars,—
For if earth so answers all
The aspirations of the soul,
There's nothing in the realms of space
Too distant for their faith to kiss!

Like clouds that on a summer's day
Roll mounted all along the sky,
To change their snowy banks to hues
Of azure brilliant crystal blues,—
So their dreams appear to blend
With some unseen and distant end,
Where spirits speak in voices low
Of a world *they* only know!
Men ask the meaning of the sun,
Of why their forms are just so born?
Of why things shape them as they do,
To bloom and die and die to grow?
And, behold! a strangeness seems
In all, as if the all were dreams
And not the pleasant actual,
But a world of wondrous soul,

Seeking of itself a death
Of every thing that gave it breath.
'Tis so that madness must be known,—
For poets often to it own.
In this realm of thought, the mind
Is sure of fancies of a kind
That shape the shadows and the light
To beings that may give such night,
As only melancholy's hand
Can point to on this natural land.
Alone, the dreamer runs to fall
And drown within his own wild soul;
But when love's bright, and charming face
Kisses his, while out in space
The lovely world assumes its place,
Then, in groves beneath its sky
The maiden takes philosophy
Into her ravish eyes, and *there*
Are all the poet's dreams,—a prayer
To beauty as he finds it here!
'Tis thus they dream,—not singly by
The lonely goddess melancholy,—
Born of birds that wing the air
Of a mental wild despair,
To conceive of ends unknown
Through corruptions of the born!
Not so they dream, but, dreaming, feel
The spells of all the lovely real,—
Like birds, that take the pleasant air,
To leave it just as bright and fair.

So they leave earth's pleasant hour
To return unto a bower,—
Ever sweet, and bright as sky,
And flowering with ecstasy!
Yet thoughts may sometimes wildly come
When gazing up into that dome,
Which rises to eternal space:
Thoughts will come, and wonders race
With wonders, till the sacred tomb
Seems to cover sky with gloom,
And dim the blue so deep above;
Yet the angel men call Love
Wings him heavenward to meet,
On paths of blue, the weary feet!
On a cloud he sits, and draws
The mental fights and crushing wars
Into pictures of sweet peace,
Where earthly lovers dream, and kiss.
And above them there he writes
With rosy shades and sunny lights,
That thoughts on God, and space, and cause
Make love the dearer,—then he draws
A halo for a golden frame,
And writes again a wondrous name,—
His own, with pen dipped into soul:
He writes the name, Immortal!
And other words he pens in dreams,
And they are in his secret names,—
Known but to lovers, who
Bask above in skies of blue;
Sit with souls above alone,
While mid earthly grandeur born,—

Grandeur which we give to heaven
When believing homes are given
To the angels, such as kings
Love to build from precious things.

Their city bathes it in the moon,—
Glitters like the stars aboon,—
Shines as stars would shine if they
Were formed like it, on plains of sky!
Its spiry world looms all alight
Into the phantom, stilly night,
And on the breeze its plaintive noise
Of murmuring voices seem to rise,
Like some weak Venus at her prayer,
To Deity for love and care!

Human thoughts on godful things,
Thought by only human kings,—
Have these men, who'd grasp the light,
Which burns the cause of All in night!
And in its beams believe that eyes
Hold every essence of the skies!
They laugh, and feast—feast sublime—
On more than food; alas! they dream
That life must ever live it here,
To move it through angelic air!
They feast within earth's richest bower,
Where nectarean climes of breathful summer
Are bathed in lights of afternoon,
Tempered by the amber moon,
Set in skies of gilded blue,
As though some heaven dim shone through:

While Night's orb, a round great hole,
Allows a sight of heaven's soul!
Through which the angels come to smile
Upon the loves on earth's green isle,—
Floating in the sea of light,
The window-moon lets on the night!

The sun, ablaze of orange flame,
Departed like a golden dream,
So the stars might show to all
The dying day possessed a soul!—
Sank into the arms of Athor,*
There to rest its flaming splendor
Until ready for the morn,—
Then with blush from Venus born,
The world will get it back again,
Rosy from its lovely queen,—
Full of love, and like love bright,
To grow the world with warm delight!
'Mid the glow of sun, and moon,
Goldish blue, and dark maroon,
Sank the heart for angels' dreams,
Couched by strange supernal streams,
Where the dead and living drew
Around them sheets of silver blue!
And rose to soar from earth on high,
Filled with saddened ecstasy!
While the sobbing of the river
Wished them always well together!

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* Athor was the Venus of the Egyptians; into her arms they believed the sun to sink for the rosy blush of the morning.

Yet upon the clinging mouth
Were the roses of life's south,
And unto a warm embrace
Fell the maiden's lovely face,—
In whose eyes no grave did rise:
Only stars of rhapsodies,
Whose sweet orbits circled near
The one who called them ever dear!

The moon, a bride unto the sun,
Spreads her nuptial veil upon
The city's marble wonders fair,—
A veil made up of every star,
Lacy with each crystal sphere,
Rich with odyle mystic power,—
To drape each maiden lovely flower,
Who, girdled with a youth's delight,
Walks through the lightful dulcet night!
Enamored with her spirit veil,
While tingling to her lover's tale!
Her eyes serene with destinies,
Sacred to futuries,—
Blended with her wonderment
And all the endless firmament,
That piles its globes in circles high
Up to the spot where all men die!

The destiny of love's new bliss
Is touched by every holy kiss
Given to her budded form,
Is haloed by her every charm

For the end in unborn soul,
And future loves hymeneal!
How precious every move of eye,
When pure to love's strange destiny!
Seraphic is the lips' caress,
Sacred their still happiness!
This is why the grave makes dear
The garden of a sun-vast star,
And why our loves beside the tomb
Think to light its gloomy room!
But, alas! the torch we carry
Is the light they use to bury,
When through paths of winter chill
They bear life down its dusky dell!
The thought of love's immortal fate
May the living fascinate,
From belief that vows of love
Forever here, are true above;
And yet our death must come before
Love's eternal deathless hour!
Thus, it is the soul is sad,
Even when 'tis light and glad,
While oft the solitudes of living
Seem a little of their dreaming
To be giving, softly giving
To the slumbers of the dying!
Then it is we strain the form
As if to clasp it from some harm!
Happy, though, that death must be,
With a wild, strange ecstasy
Shining in beseeching eyes
Soft with spells of mysteries,—

Mysteries that seem confessed
In the earth with beauty dressed,—
Which, though forced to e'er be dumb,
Whisper soothingly to come
Where the spirits play to please,
As far as God will let the breeze
And the dense-leafed, stilly wood,
Filled with tuneful voice of bird,
Tell to mortals waiting more
On their world's green, changing shore;
Where the cadence of the rills,
And the maid-loved flower-bells
Ring the anthems of a heart
That *never* said to soul "depart!"
No matter where a life may be,—
In the palace, 'neath the tree,
On the bosom of a sea,
'Mid the clouds, on mountains high,—
Ever will its spirit seek
To tell that God awaits to speak
That wondrous word of soul, and prove
For every life that it is—love!
Look where we will, earth almost says
There are no after-mysteries!
At times, when sitting by a stream,
Gurgling out its woodland dream
Among the oreads of the green
Leafy roof, who play unseen
Through the boughs to reach the sky,
It does not seem so hard to die?
And here, within this city great,
Where all is laughter in the night,

Perhaps sure death is dreaded more
Than on the little streamlet's shore?
We feel 'tis so, for often we
Love through wealth of gold, to be
Where earth is all eternity!
Yet, here a mystic flame ascends
From the torches of love's ends,
And with the unseen world so blends
The mortal paradise of spires
With empyreal-souléd fires,
That the secrets of life's birth
Almost whisper them to earth!
From the fragrance, like a song,
Flowing life's gay river long,
There unfolds sweet flowers rare,
In forms of lovely maidens fair,
Which the water-oaks pavilion
With a youthful lover's passion!
Surely heaven freely covets
This fair landscape for its spirits?—
That the angels walking holy
Might sit down and feel the glory
Of the thrilling, wondrous living,
In the trees, and flowers wedding!
Born to conquer from their birth
Were these kingly men of earth!
Born amid eternal summer,
Sweet as kiss of midnight lover
Given 'neath a frowning tower,
To a beauty in a glare
Of wavy coils of lustrous hair,

Smoothed by moonbeams trembling down
Upon their lovers' heads a crown!

Where the lightning ever plays,
There love laves his darting eyes!
And it seems the earth is molten,
And of love alone begotten;
Spinning 'round, its poles they flatten
To a dream-born disk, which covers
All its orbit, so that lovers
May by strolling step upon
The pearly surface of the moon!
Where the pathways are of silver,
And the airs with dreams soft quiver
To souléd words: like rings of water
These reach out to orbs aboon,
Veiled with veils of the unknown!
That their flowers may, with gladness
Blooming, lift the empty sadness
Of eternal realms of darkness!
Thus, to love these mortals own
The sweet advantages the moon
Gives to earth, and earthly dreaming,—
To be heard where all is sleeping,
Some strange effluence of being!
Yet no sign comes back with glory,
Golden with their spirit's story,
But the faith of eyes, sweet blending,
Seems to say the sign is coming;
Think how far it has to come,
And the way,—so near the tomb!

On the maiden's crimson lip,
The lippets of the breezes sleep,
That have come from lands divine
With the purple-loaded vine,
Where the sunset dreams, and sighs
In the lingering of eyes!
On *his* lips the strength of youth
Meets the glory of her mouth
For a kiss, that melts two hearts
Into many starry parts,
Which float away like music prayers
Among the wilderness of spheres,
Until some angel passing by,
Must be pleased to see the sky,
And linger there to meet its bride,—
A mourning maiden, not yet dead!
And yet the loves that mortals know
Would hardly for the angels do?
But let us think that, as a bird,
Some pure, and sacred, holy word
In the sea of spirit dips
Before some kisses join lips!
After this, what can't we say
May not be for carnal joy?
After this some stars grow dim,
And heaven centres in a limb,—
Moulded like a tropic dream,
Luminous with essence from
The halo youth weaves 'bout a form!
The life that lived to woo so long
Sings love's eager speechless song,

And dreams that took us up above
Oft fly before the fires of love!
That burns beneath the heavy eyes,
Like starry dying, flaming skies,
Rising 'neath sweet bonds to break
Over cheek, and sloping neck,
Down into the finger-tips,
As dreams fulfil them on nude lips!
Ah! heaven then is here it seems,
And fancies of it only dreams!
Graves do mock, and spirits sink
Into crimson blushing drink,
Which mounts into the brain, and there
Mingles willowy, the fair
In a realm of bated sighs,
Budding into known joys;
Pleasures that enticing grow
The greater as the moments go;
Love's fair vision drops its dream,—
Love's bold arms holds all its frame,
Draped with orris, clinging to
The vision resting here below,
To hear a lover's panting fire,—
Thus satisfied to fly no higher!

Woman—world of love and light,
Shrine of every spirit,
That as joy lives in the blood,
As in a wood-land lives a bird!
Frail as roses in the moon,
Strong as spring-life for sweet June,

Soft with lips, and God with eyes,—
Two little gates to Paradise!
Like a fairy spirit dancing,
Flooded by the moon world beaming;
Girlhood, maiden, wife,—'tis so,
Thou for man doth lovely grow,—
He who bids the things of earth
Confess that all grew for thy birth!
Woman, woman, like an air
For breath of all that's only fair!
Divine with all a form can be
Without becoming Deity!
Oh, the land we call unknown
Must have thrilled when thou wast born!
And noble spirits must have prayed
To behold thee when a maid!
Thou who tempts the stars to earth
When they presence gives love's birth!
Surely He who made thy blood,
And lovely life, wast none but God?
For all which spreads it from thy face,
And from thy frame of loveliness,
Blossoms with thee into peace
And worlds of holy happiness!
And yet, thou canst be too supreme,—
So to ruin love's sweet dream,
And in its ruin, go with him,—
For if he, with wanton eyes,
Is beloved by thy fair gaze,
Thou but human, follows him,
Dazed, and lovely, down to sin!

But 'tis his, and never thine!—
All angels know thy love for him!
And on pathways in the moon
They find the doves,—dead,—alone;
For these were looking down it seems,
And died with thee for love's lost dreams!
Perched together on the moon,—
Perched together up aboon,
The silvery boughs grew cold too soon!

Passing through the doorways grand,
Lovers see man's fairy-land,
And in the dances dream of love
As they dreamt of it above,—
Out upon the marble pave,
Rising from the soft lipped wave.
Wrapped in the glory of the arms,
Of love in one, and yet two forms,
Sweet music ripples o'er their worlds
And all their throbbing life enfolds,—
With melody which makes the kiss
Seem more than earthly happiness,—
Wells through the heart, and clasps the soul
With ecstasies beyond control
Of mortal ears to hear in peace,
Without a fear that it may cease;
Frantic music, full of tender
Yearnings of a valorous lover,
Floats in waves of undertone
To the spirit of the moon,

There to die in dreams away
Among the valleys silvery!
The tinkle of far vesper bells
Through deep groves of palmy dells,
Softly mingle with these notes,
As trumpet's chord with angelots—
Half-human song, whose sponsal breath
Most storts the stagnant pulse of death,
And on wings to spiry realms
Bears the soul enclothed in dreams!
The pleading nocturne of the lute,
The songful whistle of the flute,
Wells radial, in winds whose heart
Becomes the natural breezes' part,
And sings with every sinuous stream,
And every dreamful moony beam!
The tuneful goddess of the lyre
Melts the fiercest soul with fire;
Whose glow fills all humanity
With kindness and humility.
If in the eye the trumpet's call
Blazes with the warrior's soul,
'Tis that right and life so dear
May look to him for strength and care.
Where the deep notes of a hymn
Ascends with souls in one grand dream,
The harmony of love in men
Casts off the clinging robes of sin,
And gives such sense of tender things
That men, a noble band of kings,
Each hold on high a sceptre's might,
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Of mutual love for what is high,
And fitted man's society!
Music seeks a lover's breast
For the general human best,
And unites the bridal twain
For different states of social gain!
Music slaves the strongest breath,
And maddens mind to think on death;
It draws the heart with spells supreme,
Delirious with touch, and dream;
Blends the form of charms divine
In realms of pleasure almost pain,
And buries in the soul the maid
With sylphine limbs, and lovely head,
To feed upon their beauties rare
A love that borders on despair
Of ever proving *all* its care!

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Sweet spirit of the inner soul,
Pervading earth invisible,
Thou must come from harps above,
For we know thee but to love!
We feel thee as we feel a kiss,
And oft 'tis thou who gives the bliss!
Yes, strange effluence of the breeze,
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The images of art and earth,
In their fancy take such birth

As superhuman shapes would do
If only spirits lived below!
Wondrous thoughts well through the brain,
In long processions of the scene
Transformed to worlds, where sense, and sight
Move through the blood with strange delight,
As if its pulse absorbed the essence
Of the supernatural presence,—
So the elements of all
Might shape their intervital soul
To the throb of living streams
Of deep life, and give it dreams!
The spirits that preside above
Over all which harbors love,
And those that mould a beauty's star,
Take them shapes in life's wide sphere,—
Forms that match surrounding things,
And yet without their spirit's wings.
Their thought is great with fancy, from
The feeding of it with the form,
Ripe with shades and lights of all
That makes for man the beautiful.
When lips caress, and arms entwine,
A dreamy love almost divine
Seems to loll by windows far,
Opening out upon a star,
Whose garden is like gardens here,
Only much more lovelier!
For every fountain's spray flits by
To reveal an angel's sky,
Where vast spirits talk and seem
To show their faces for the dream

Mysteries that seem confessed
In the earth with beauty dressed,—
Which, though forced to e'er be dumb,
Whisper soothingly to come
Where the spirits play to please,
As far as God will let the breeze
And the dense-leafed, stilly wood,
Filled with tuneful voice of bird,
Tell to mortals waiting more
On their world's green, changing shore;
Where the cadence of the rills,
And the maid-loved flower-bells
Ring the anthems of a heart
That *never* said to soul "depart!"
No matter where a life may be,—
In the palace, 'neath the tree,
On the bosom of a sea,
'Mid the clouds, on mountains high,—
Ever will its spirit seek
To tell that God awaits to speak
That wondrous word of soul, and prove
For every life that it is—love!
Look where we will, earth almost says
There are no after-mysteries!
At times, when sitting by a stream,
Gurgling out its woodland dream
Among the oreads of the green
Leafy roof, who play unseen
Through the boughs to reach the sky,
It does not seem so hard to die?
And here, within this city great,
Where all is laughter in the night,

Perhaps sure death is dreaded more
Than on the little streamlet's shore?
We feel 'tis so, for often we
Love through wealth of gold, to be
Where earth is all eternity!
Yet, here a mystic flame ascends
From the torches of love's ends,
And with the unseen world so blends
The mortal paradise of spires
With empyreal-souléd fires,
That the secrets of life's birth
Almost whisper them to earth!
From the fragrance, like a song,
Flowing life's gay river long,
There unfolds sweet flowers rare,
In forms of lovely maidens fair,
Which the water-oaks pavilion
With a youthful lover's passion!
Surely heaven freely covets
This fair landscape for its spirits?—
That the angels walking holy
Might sit down and feel the glory
Of the thrilling, wondrous living,
In the trees, and flowers wedding!
Born to conquer from their birth
Were these kingly men of earth!
Born amid eternal summer,
Sweet as kiss of midnight lover
Given 'neath a frowning tower,
To a beauty in a glare
Of wavy coils of lustrous hair,

Smoothed by moonbeams trembling down
Upon their lovers' heads a crown!

Where the lightning ever plays,
There love laves his darting eyes!
And it seems the earth is molten,
And of love alone begotten;
Spinning 'round, its poles they flatten
To a dream-born disk, which covers
All its orbit, so that lovers
May by strolling step upon
The pearly surface of the moon!
Where the pathways are of silver,
And the airs with dreams soft quiver
To souléd words: like rings of water
These reach out to orbs aboon,
Veiled with veils of the unknown!
That their flowers may, with gladness
Blooming, lift the empty sadness
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A dreamy love almost divine
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Opening out upon a star,
Whose garden is like gardens here,
Only much more lovelier!
For every fountain's spray flits by
To reveal an angel's sky,
Where vast spirits talk and seem
To show their faces for the dream

That, as consciousness, appears
To be the meaning of the stars!

Life moves decked with flowers here,—
Flowers through its feeling year,
And the sun which warms it best
Is the thought which throbs the breast,
And the clouds that will come o'er
The freshest bloom of earthly flower
Do but start a sympathy
For the rainy melancholy,
Which, as tears, goes out to flow
O'er love's land, that it may know
Its breathful hues spread sweetly ripe
And mellow on the wondering lip!

Oh, love, what are you, love? confess
The secret of your happiness.
Does it lie in form of maid
Approaching in her charms arrayed
For Beauty's Court? or does it lie
In the life which takes the sky,
To find a starry, beamy path
Which leads it to her silvery laugh?
Or is its essence in the feet
That stray uncertain till they meet
A part to which the heart was grown?
Although in dreams this part alone
Was delighted in; and, know,
A soul so blended with lashed eyes
That, when meeting once their gaze,

All perfect things commingle them
For eternity of time!
Love, what are you? oh, confess
What is eternal time to us?
In which the sad and sweets of earth
Wreathe the moments of our birth,
With the charms of form and sense
Betrothed for speechless eloquence
Of a knowledge only bliss,
Whose fruit is rubies sweet with kiss!
Oh, love, what are you? come, confess
The secret of *this* happiness!
The lips are warm, the eyes droop full
Of the wild, unuttered soul;
The arms enfold the dreams of this,—
Years of dreams fulfilled impress
Upon the real, whose throbbing life
Flows through the youth with sense of wife!
Now the day of Nature thrills
Through every vein with painless spells;
The body blends it with the soul,
Its charms converse with charms of All!
Oh, love, confess; what means the West,
Stealing deathful to the breast?
Where pictures of two lovers blend
Their earth-born loves with mystery's end!

'Tis now the lights with lowered glow
Ray the air, which seems to grow
Spirits souled with love, and sky,
Who whisper words of poetry

Into the ears of those who lie,
Tingling with omniscient joy!—
Thrilling with that perfect health
Which is not conscious of its wealth;
Knows only things the senses know,
And these bloom golden as they grow.
Sombre lamps of chaste device
Burn their oils of odored spice;
Sad sweet night falls over all
Its sympathetic, dreamful soul.
The dreamy goddess of the night
Comes in starry robes bedight,
With the moon upon her brow
Gleaming like the sunlit snow!
Men embrace her, now at peace,
Resting on the couch of bliss.
Oh, dusky goddess, coming from
The realms where thoughtful stooping Time
Sits with folded wings, how sweet
Is it thy dreamy eyes to meet!
Sad with longings, wide and dark,
And lighted deep with love's wild spark!
No other world thou visits surely
Loves thee better, or more truly
Than the earth, who, hot and burning,
Lays it in thy arms for dreaming,—
Rests it feasting on thy eyes,
And given up to ecstasies!

Before a solemn altar, where,
Through a window, gleams a star

From out the land of countless globes,
Two lovers sit in royal robes;
He reads a poem, and his lips
Interpret true the heart that leaps,
At his own words, to her soul,
Listening so lovable!
Youth here reads of wondrous themes
Dreamt alone in sacred dreams:
Of what he thinks humanity
Means to God, and Unity;
Of just the place the maiden fills
Within the universe's spells;
Of what is life, and death, and love
To mighty worlds we see above;
Of how deep he feels her being,
Part of all the essence looming
In the twilight's soul still dreaming!
Yet he reads her of destructions,
Sublime material transfusions,
Where their beings' unity
Will surge through all immensity!
Such as mind knows nothing now
[Except within the crater's flow],
Unless to know the mighty All
Is one illimitable soul!
He points her to the pleasant earth,
Then ponders with her on their birth,
And on their end—but very soon
They find them dreaming in the moon,
For love is fitted to its place,—
To dreams of earthly happiness;

No matter how the soaring mind,
May its pleasures seek to bind
With schemes of deep philosophy,
The lips resolve all mystery
To *their* world's eternity !
This is enough, enough for these,
Who drink them in the evening breeze,—
Inhaling its soft sympathies,
That spread around their thoughtless feet,—
Mysteries, unknown, *yet sweet,*
As through mystic walks they lead,
The happy life out to the dead !
Let the stars, which rest them on
The face of youth when it is gone,
Tell the awful truth, if 'twill ;
Life loves its warm, delightful spell,
And can wait, as these now wait,
And never be to all too late !—
These a drop of pure dear loving,
In all this sea of feastful living.
Happy lovers, what know you
Of the ivy's bridal dew ?
Of that ceremony deep,
Where the worms do never sleep,
While the bridegroom, grimy Death,
Links his arm in human breath ?
What know you, whose souls are wild,
Whose eyes dream soft and kindly mild ;
Whose every sigh is mooned with bliss,
And margaritic with a kiss ;
Who would suffer, work, and brave,
All before you'd take the grave ?

Oh, blissful time! Oh, happy hour!
Tender, lovely as a flower,
Bright as all the suns of sky!
Why will God let love e'er die?
Love, which worships so the real,
Love, which never all does tell,
But lives upon the other soul,
Trembling to be beautiful
In the other eyes for bliss,
And a rapturous happiness!
Live the joy! Oh, lovers live
All your youthful life can give!
Feast upon the sights you own,—
Life is joy, and death is moan!
Within the halls there's laughter now,
Would 'twere always for you so!
Live 'mid splendors, walk 'mid gold,
The world is Thebes,—her sights behold!

Through arcades that loftily
Swell their rich embroidery
On the languid-moving air—
The moving, spiritful, sweet air—
Break long beams of goel-red light
Out into the sea-blue night,
Visioning a world of all
Art can give unto the soul!
No need to dream, for dreams come down
From the world of fairy-moon,
Showing life's delightsome charms
Bodied in imperial forms!

The air is sweet with dulcet notes
Of the dreamful angelots,
The river lined with painted boats,
And banners of the victors fly
Canopied upon the sky!
Great is Thebes with every glory,—
A human world of human beauty!
Upon the vast mosaic floors
That roof the temples 'neath the stars,
The people on their couches lie,
Dreaming omnipariently!
Walking in their dreams along
Pathways 'round the astral throng,
Seeing in each orb of light
More and more for life's delight,
And more for wonder, which increases
With the pleasures of the senses,
Till the mind would fain leap from
All that seeks to make it dumb!
Till the very state of living
Groans from all its godlike dreaming!
Cries to *know* with feelings sad,—
With feeling bursting, nearly mad!
And yet they see a unity
Which binds them to the earthly:
From their bed of ease they scan
The fairest country owned by man!
Basking 'neath translucent skies,
Holding worlds that seem to blaze
Like very suns of colored fires,
Burning with divine desires

To foretell the human heart,
That earth with them but makes a part
Of existence that is great
With eternal life, and light!
The human dreaming understands
The sacredness of matter's lands,
And life asserts its value to
Things above with things below.
The images which best translate
Every grand, and lovely trait
Stand them silvered 'neath the sky,
Emblems of man's majesty!—
Types impalpable 'twould seem,
And only possible to dream!
The ideal, which had moulded its
Worlds of worshipped spirits
Into blocks of fashioned stone,
Spreads its kingly steps, a throne,
For the lovesome feet of men
To mount and *touch* their heaven!
The swany nudity of form,
In the marble's sculptured charm,
Lifts the damsel's modest veil,
As the tender, pleading tale
Shines it forth from mutual eyes,
Shaded by elysian skies.
As the hours softer grow
With the night's love-dreamy glow,
The pomp and force of pageantry
Gives it to the sympathy
Of the babbling fountain-jets,
Sweet with songful amorettes,

On which the velvet moonlight slept,
Fondled in the songs which leapt,
Dancing to a chorus sweet
Of a thousand damsels' feet!
On the walls of sheeny stone,
Reaching to the painted sun,
Gleaming on the lofty ceilings,
Loom the histories of kings,—
Hieroglyphics, whose strange signs
Are graved in brilliant-colored lines
Of jazel-blue, and bronzy golds,
Black, and purple, while unfolds
By the towery walls low beds,
With feet of gilded lions' heads,
And draperies of silver-reds.
Here and there a tall tripod
Burns a flame to some great god,—
A flame that waves a lurid glow
Of orange brightness, flickering low.
Skins of beasts spread out like fields,
And 'gainst great statues burnished shields;
Awful idols decked with gems
In vast rooms, where mortal dreams
Feast on love, to lay upon
The couches 'neath the painted sun;
They love and drink delicious wines,
Gazing on the venust lines
That, like smooth, tinted, tropic seas,
Gleam in beauty up to eyes
Closing heavy with the charms
That yearn for mighty, stalwart arms,
In which to dream of grandeurs great
In olios of fairy light!

The golden, graceful, festooned barge
Glides, illumined with the cierge,
Airily along the shore,
Feathering each ponderous oar;
The gorgeous daughter of the king,
'Neath the wivern's gilded wing,
Plays her taper finger-tips
'Mid the ripples' limpid lips.
Luted notes to some fair dame
Plead around the barge—a dream;
The tassels of its drapery
Drag the wavelets velvetly,
And on the tufted cushions lie
The forms of those who dreamily
Let the wanton airs of night
Leap to lips in strange delight!—
Abated wilderness of words,
Praising love, and chanting gods!
Here the galley decked for feasts,
With purple sails and prows of beasts,
Gilded, and with lamps for eyes,
Moves to pipes' soft symphonies
O'er the gentle river's flow,
Like a palace all aglow
With pomp, and life's voluptuousness
Lived 'mid earth's delightfulness!
Upon their decks, at boards of wine,
The feasters sing and wanton dine,—
Sing to time the bending oar
With pæans of the conqueror!
Upon the deck [caressed by night]
Of a galley gold-bedight

The queen, seductive, bids the youth
Carol ballads of the South,
Her dress a copy of the one
Fair Venus wore to greet the sun!
Pearls as large as eggs of dove
Are clasped, to better please young Love,
Upon her ankles and her arms,
And 'bout her bosom's changing charms.
The fairest virgins of her court
Serve her wines and luscious fruit,
While sweet perfumes burning near
Make flowerful the austral air.
The hautboy's low, angelic lays,
Tuneful seek the dulcet breeze
Unfolding damask banners of
A thousand boats of song, and love,
Which follow after her to pay
An homage fit such royalty.
The light from out the palace halls
On the moonlit river falls,
Smoothly flowing to the sea
Æolian swells of melancholy,
Which steal them soft, and listlessly,
Out to where the shores are dense
With tropical magnificence;
Where the crocodile at ease
Basks him in the evening breeze,
Like great trunks of ebon-trees,
Lying still with fiery eyes!

In the sky there seems reflected
Some vast world ecstasiated,—

'Tis the mirage of the soul,
Where the heart leaps to its goal,—
Imbaned from all, upon a throne
Where all must be in two, as one!
The earth elated with their rise,
Meets them happy in the skies,
While a bow of worlds spans o'er,
From their hearts, to Mystery's shore!
Their lives roll on like emerald seas,
Whose foam breaks bright with beauties
Of sweet pleasures, high upon
The rocks of silver in the moon!
'Tis so these lovers floating by,
Glide o'er the river silvery,—
Whose wavelets time the dreamy swell,
Of their soul's ecstatic spell!
And receive upon their crests,
Eyes, and hands, and throbbing breasts!
Worlds go by them into space,—
These they catch with happiness;
Dividing stars, proclaiming all,
Theirs by right of love, and soul!
Every beauty of the earth
Lives alone through joy's birth;
They touch a wave to touch a sphere,
And kiss each other in the air!
While the lute it gives them wings,
Love is king of all earth's kings!
And his Empress with her charms
Lays her dreaming in his arms!
While the tide of blushes stealing
Shows each modest, maiden feeling

Conquered with sweet ebrious,
For kisses soft and amorous!
Life's gay stream flows dreamy 'long,
Enchanting with its bubbling song!
And its breath blows languid o'er
A poppy-tinted ravish shore,
Where the moon lays on the breast,
Light, and lethean with the West!
Where the eyelids dreamily
Raise them slow and passionately,
Letting in the light of bliss
With a lingering, souléd kiss,
Illimitable with happiness!
Happiness, which loves to fold
Around the lyric beams of gold,
That lay in lazy dreams of light
Upon the solitudes of night,—
That tremble to infinity,
And use the evening shades to be,
Mortals' sad still ecstasy,—
Which forgets that Death controls
The giving of eternal souls!

On the plazza's vast extent
The king reviews each regiment,—
Mighty and armipotent!
By the glare of flaming lights,
Curling up to ruddy heights,
March the splendrous throngs before
The throne within the palace door;

Moving in one mass of life,
Speared and bannered for the strife
Of barbaric, frightful war!
The very ground they seem to jar!
Plumed with every regal splendor,
Stepping with united valor,—
Proud of all their healing scars!
Trained for glories gained in wars!
Miles of camels line the square,
And elephants, who grandly wear
The trappings of the farther East,
Stand in awful splendors dressed;
The people on the temples throng,
Catching up the soldiers' song,
To chant it high into the skies
To the god of victories!
Ten thousand horses prance, and draw
The flamy chariots of war,
While airs of breath, and lights from all,
Ascend their martial mighty soul,—
So high above, an eagle sees
To make his way through nighted skies!
Ebon slaves with silver collars
Bend in rows before the victors;
On whose breasts a lion black
Bears a Cupid on his back.
From fields of carnage they have come,
Marching to the harp and drum.
Peace is peace by right of might!
Its calm, one long supreme delight,
Lived as worlds do live when fire
Has ended in wide landscapes fair!

On battle-fields they fought with man,—
The strongest foe since earth began
The seasons of her vital plan!
And victorious over all,—
Now hold their praising carnival.
At the threshold of their city
Come their women with their beauty,
To bestow their wreaths of love,
And the emblem of the dove,
On a fleecy ribboned lamb,
'Bove a leaf of emerald palm!

Far upon the plains of Asia,
'Neath the paly moon's aurora
Of a pitying silver rain,
Lay the strong that fate has slain!
Ghastly lay their forms in heaps
Of everlasting bloody sleeps!
Fermenting on the sultry airs,
Dead to all the people's prayers!
Rivulets of gore run 'round
The mighty soldier on the ground,
While the glasséd and leaden eye
Tell what it is to writhe, and die!
Oh, the life that spills it here,—
Far away from homes so fair!
The ground the bodies only bed,
And it a field of gleaming red,
That seems to cry of phrenzied will
Fighting in a human hell,—

Of shrieks, and groans, and wounds, and deaths,
Of gaspings of a thousand breaths!
Rolling 'way in thunder-clouds
To realms of silence, and of shrouds,
Where chilly worms like serpents wind
Around the brain devoid of mind;
Where forms of spectral things weigh damp,
Beside a skull, which makes a lamp,
Glaring on the walls of tombs,
Rising up in gorgon glooms!—
Glooms, that hold a sun of red,
Whose beams are bodies, flocking dead,
Which fall upon a land of trees
Unfolding leaves with agonies,
And dropping them when hardly born
Beneath the bloody, awful sun!
Shields of brass, and spears of steel,
Lying in a vast dark dell,
Like the star-world's in a well,
And by them stiffened, valiant men,
Who if spared, would now have been
In the palace feasting deep
Upon some fulled and dream-touched lip!
How soon forgotten, ah, how soon!
'Tis so that men forget we own
Among them life the same as theirs;
Any life 'twould seem is well,
If it but turn the social wheel!
On this field they all once stood,
Until they fell into their blood,
Drowned in battle's terror wild;
Slumbering now 'neath skies so mild,

In the winds that blow from caves
Scented with the mould of graves!
Horses, camels, men, and death!
Lie beneath a dome of breath,
Which breathes the moony, phantom clouds,
And urges on the frantic birds
To a feast of hearts now still,—
Of blood that yesterday did feel
A valor worthy of their name,
Impatient for this senseless fame!
Let us draw the curtain, then,
Over these still awful men,
For nations e'er will fight,—'tis so
They cover o'er the earth and grow.
The end is fair; the means, alas!
Only death and awfulness!
'Tis well this scene is far removed
From where the spared are crowned and loved;
'Tis well that miles of verdure spread
Between the city and the dead.

From one vast palace to another
We with admiration wander;
All the city seems to be
A garden bloomed with royalty:
In the court-yard 'mid the trees,
In the halls of melodies,
By the river's voiceful wave,
In the mosque,—e'en 'bove the grave,
Mass the flowers, sound the joys,
Of the city's happy voice!

What a dream for men to feel!
Out upon the river's swell
Whole miles of temples can be seen,
Diademed like to a queen,
Stepped from out the realms of spheres
To light the life of men's grand years,
With a love for everything
Fitted man and fitted king!
The very air is livid with joy,
And ascends into the sky
Like a mighty, living flame,
To light the stars with human fame!—
Then falls down, to float along
The earth a shower of sweet song,
Low, and dear, and filled with light,
Illumining the stilly night
With the human spirit great!
Which, feasted on the wealth of kings,
Hears sweet voices in those things
That live upon the sylvan spheres,
Girdling 'bout the earth, and stars,
As satellites of heart and soul,
Illumining the forms of all
With a light so magical,
So surpassing beautiful,
That without the worlds of thought
All natural things would count for naught.
The constellations fresco them
To imitate the loveliest dream;—
With their light ineffable
Paint fair pictures with a soul,

Upon the night's cerulean dome,
Of love-born spirits, strangely one
With the face that gives love's dawn!
Like mysteries we read in light,
Centaury travelled through the night,
Appear sweet spectres, who seems know
Love's secrets in their whispers low;
'Tis so the mind of fancy longs
In realms of beings, whose soft songs
Are ever singing through the heart,
And lighting up with thrilling start
E'en the gloom that vaults above
The dimmest world, with torch of love!
Among the wave-swayed fenny reeds
Hide the likenesses of maids,
In blue marsh-imprisoned stars,
Bounding phantom-like on airs;
While hovering throngs of soul-felt things,
Beauty veiled, give dulcet wings
To the velvet dome of night,
Resting on an aerial site.
These fan with sympathy life's thrill,
And mount beyond earth's bounded spell
With their satellitious soul,
And there bestow the dreams of All,
Where the godful waters flow
In whispers sweetly mellowed low,—
Where golden clouds from Western thrones
Settle for the evening tones,
And the melody, that here
Moves it gloomy on the air,
Seems to speak of beings sad,

Who never know a moment glad,
Excepting dialled by the dead,
Sitting 'round the universe,
Chanting soft, immortal verse
Before a spirit of the sun,
Lifting up its robes of dun
To look upon them with its eyes,
Irised with the breath of skies,
Which, when full upon them, blaze,
Changing all to endless joys!

The mild-eyed stars with tenderness
Seek the river's pleasantness;
The mermaid wavelets, heaven-kissed,
Rock the barges on their breast;
They dream along the palace-steps,
Caressing with their silvery lips
The fair tanned beauty's naked knee,
Who, laughing in her wanton glee,
Breaks the starry images,
Throwing to the tropic breeze
Her meshy wealth of silky hair,—
An ether of dark glossy spar!
But the stars, as if they knew
She'd break their dreamy places through,
Quickly sleep again upon
The meremaid wavelets, one by one!
Taken to their tender arms,
There to rest once more their charms!
While the maiden seems to see,
For those who made this vast city,

How that heaven ever strives,
To sleep beside her chosen lives!—
Men who dreaming, could awake
To sheath their swords, then stepping, make
The very rocks to sink and shake,
With their tramp and peerless strength,
And their numbers endless length!

The rounded earth bask jubilant,
And with its life luxuriant,—
Enveloped with an idyl's soul
Of genius breathing of the All,—
Calls the orbs and lunar airs
To its self for martial prayers,
That her men may ever be
Regal monarchs of their sea;
To sail where wonders for the mind
They may ever endless find,
As a thousand isles in bloom
Smiling on the barren tomb!
Vernant throngs of blessing fly
To the city's ecstasy;
The dulcet odorants of East,
The breezes from the mountained West,
Mingle with the victors' feast,
That all the people ever may
Live in Thebes supremest joy,—
Dwell to feel the grandest sense
Of earth, and art's magnificence
Edenized with love's sweet charms,
Clasped in one another's arms!

For a love which looms its spires,
Blazing with fulfilled desires
Of all the human dare unfold,
Upon this color-speaking world!
Here the maiden is so fair,
That earth must shine a fairy star,
For other loves in worlds on high
To worship for *their* ecstasy!
Beauty, that enslaves the sense,
While feeling all the innocence
Of two hemispheres of white,
In rising loveliness, while night
Throws a shower of star-blossoms
O'er her head and o'er her bosoms!
Beauty, fairest virgin-limbed,
Such as spirits might have dreamed
When, before the earth grew round,
They listened for its bloomy sound;
Envious of what might be
Given life's eternity!
Ladied, and with veilless lines
Mingling like sweet jasmine-vines,
For a flower parted full
Of the romance of the soul!
Hungry for the lotus kiss
To feed upon for pleasantness,—
Ravish, lolling, supine, free
Of all desires, except to be
Dreamed upon by tropic eves,
And shaded by the murmuring leaves,—
There to wait expectantly
A lover's lion constancy!

With this given, to become
Hilarious to beat of drum,
And full as he of war and blood,
Fired with love, and sign of god!
Noble, dreamy, heedless, fair,
As a storm-tossed amber star!
Dewed as roses, wild as birds,
Chasing after sun-kissed clouds!—
All that woman changes to,
When only pleasure has to do
With decking jewels 'bout her brow;
With rounded arms, like springful-beamets,—
Moving like two lovely spirits,
To enfold on clouds of rapture
Souls alive with breath of pleasure!
While the flowing of her tresses—
Like a rivulet of kisses!—
Falls an overwhelming stream
Through the land-scape of love's dream!
While her eyes, aflame with all
That makes her being beautiful,
Light this country with a moon
Florescent in its every zone!
But, ah! they weep, so bitter weep!—
Those with lilies gone to sleep,
Whose bed is made of dust and shroud,
Whose spirits rests them as a cloud
About the mountain-tops above,
A country blossoming with love,—
Where the omniparous soul
Whispers low, and lovable,
The value of a holy state,

To the greatest, of a great
Unity of all complete!
Yes, they weep, so bitter weep!—
Those with lilies gone to sleep,
For they see between the lip
A little serpent crawling out,
To wrap its growing coils about
All that sweetens so the kiss
From fascinating wantonness,—
A wantonness that feeds upon
The tenderest odes to woman,—
That through glasses of her form
Sees the pure of Nature's charm,
From the portals of a dream
Of a loveliness supreme,—
Beyond the tongue's enamored praise:
In an overwhelming daze,
The dreamer falls into the arms
Of the passion-panting storms,
Where the Muses struggle tossed,
Penning poems that are lost,
After teaching in a calm
The best intelligence of man!
Which loves to seek the goodly best,
In the morning, noon, and West,—
Of fair spirits, that control
The purest poetry of the soul!
But within the flame of love
There flies a dusky, cooing dove
To light upon the maiden's couch,
And warm it by the subtile torch,

That dazzles o'er her lolling head,—
Lovely, winsome, charming, dead,—
Dead to those who lilies keep,
Pressed to bosoms in their sleep!
Dead to these, in twilights rare,
Of fancy painted, panting air!
Lifting up the fevered lid
From the world-eye, where the maid,
Paints her self in blushy clouds,
Then in silent flowered woods;
Drooping, helpless, all aflame,
With her soul in such a dream
Of blissful feelings, that 'twould seem
Only angels might surpass,
If fallen, her sweet wantonness!
For the stars are robbed of all
Their jewelled light to feed her soul,
And the bells of valley flowers
Sin to make her secret bowers;
While some upon the zephyr breeze
Betray them chiming out her joys!
With all that aids the natural eye
For artistic revelry,—
With daintiest things, as well as grand:
What a living fairy-land!
For richest wines that love can brew,—
Sparkle, flowing, ever new!
How sweet to lips born full, and warm
With every crimson fiery charm!
How deep the drink where wine, so bright,
Runs fountful with a wild delight!

For here the tropic life of all
Blooms with beauty wonderful!
They wander with their spirits far,
To find a willing, blazing star
That shall always lend its light
Unto every ravish sight!
On the paths that lead away
Through groves of sweet nepenthe,
Out to realms of dreamy mind,
They meet with Venus far too kind!
If a rose did bloom in space
Upon a star's god-haloed face,
Its scarlet hue would match it best
With the blushy cheek now kissed,
And its perfume better would
Be admired, and understood,
In the tresses of that maid
Who with tempting dangers played!
Temptation here is dressed above
To compromise a perfect love,
And sainted men confess that soul
Feasted on the wonderful,
When compelled to wind its arms
About a maid's refulgent charms;
Receives a thrill so fiery deep
That virtue, startled into sleep,
Can only dream, and, dreaming, keep
Such pleasure for its weakly will,—
Remorse to strangle and to kill!
The blossoms of the fruit of love
Open in a woody grove,

Where the mosses and the grass
Whisper of the lolling lass,
With her eyes upon the birds
And her arms about the gods!
Who, when lost to better things,
Make the lesser rule them kings
O'er a land of crimson buds,
Parted for unuttered words.
Each new thought is fresh delight,
A life put in some lovely night!
To move it for a sympathy
With some tempting mystery,—
Looking out from heavy eyes,
Moving with the dreams of sighs!
The pomp of power gained in war,
Blazoned in their homes before
A shrine where love was painted free
And wild with budding frailty!
So wild, so rash at midnight times,
That blood and battle made its dreams,
And graven shields, and spears of iron,
With mantles from the tawny lion!
Fed the pride of woman so
That *she* oft drew shy Cupid's bow,
To fall with admiration on
The necks of men she thought the sun!
As standing tall, beneath the domes,
They gave her these palatial homes,
Towering up a wilderness
Of artistic gorgeousness!
As if the kings of ocean grave
Piled them up the purple wave,

And used the sea-maid's golden eyes
To light the awful depths of seas!
So vasty strange their arts swell high,
With a grandeur for the eye,
Supreme with awe-inspiring might,
Foamed with almost living light
Upon the flowers of the soul,
There to break and tumble on
Charmful beauties elfin born!

In the palace, then, their women,
Smooth with moonbeams and the golden
Blending of tenebrious lights,
Drink deliriously delights!
Fairer than the asphodel,
Haloed with incarnate spell,
As they loose a cestus zone,
And mount on love to love's fair throne!
While the shapely, jewelled head,
On a panther's skin,—a bed,—
Calls beseechingly its love
Into a soul-lit, dreamy grove
Of love-round eyes and gold-decked arms,
Lissome raised 'bove globous charms,—
Each a woman in a moonet,
Moving like a venust spirit
Through warm clouds of Cytherean climbs,
Shining smiles of dulcet dreams!
Like dusky poppies laved in sea
Of an ingling ecstasy,
To dally with the soul's wild storm,
And calm it in a land of form,

With arms that lay among their tresses
Like lips amid a world of kisses!
With eyes in which a panting night
Awaits for mornings of delight;
The souls of them seem swimming there,
Shaded in soft eves of hair!
As the pinky feet of doves,
Loosed as blushes for dear loves,
Touch the trembled limbs, wild sighs
Flash as moon-beams in their eyes,—
Beams alive with melting dreams
That flow from lashes over limbs
In little rills of life afire,
Reflecting all the starry air!—
Sweet flowers gifted with the soul
Of the human beautiful,
What man, if man, could look, and go
His way and leave them to the woe
Of panting for the love of him,
So that life might bloom supreme?
As summer seas rise to the moon,
So their bosoms swell alone
To the airs, and hug the shore,
Of the dipping evening star,—
A shore where love would fain uphold
All the arms would now enfold,
And tell with eyes—in which sweet form
Lolls supine as the soul, so warm—
That love's wild tears for these to bear
Appear life's sorrow, pain, and care.
Not long they wait upon the day
Of love's surpassing ecstasy;

The gentle wings of Cupid bring
Affinities of souls that sing
Together one most ravish lay,—
Whose new-born notes in fullest joy
Hover, as their arms, above
Their smiling faces bathed in love!
Long custom harmed not modesty
In visioning that beauty
Left to sculptors to disclose
In every fascinating pose.
Born where glowing climate warms
The greater part of human forms,
Love ne'er lacked a summer sphere
In which to feast it on the fair;
And every dream that fanned its fire
Glowed the fairer, since its star
Hid behind no cloudy dress,
But dazzled forth in nakedness!—
Which in all its beauty grew
The dullest soul from things below
Into heaven's, where no time
Was given but to love and dream!
The paintings on the mountained walls,
[Idyls of half-mystic souls]
Glow enchanting with the charms
Of statured, fairy, graceful forms;
Interpreting through groupings rare,
Of wondrous shapes most veilless fair—
The gazer's thoughts, who copy well
The artist, in their souls, to reel
From pleasure more than all-supreme,
And meteorous each endless dream,

That follow one another to
Bewitching wilds, which ever grow
To meet with sweet reality
Every dream and every sigh
That with form or ravish tongue
Was ever pressed, or bated sung!
Echoes from a laky realm,
Where pleasures meet in one sweet dream,
Swell to worlds that choose the sky
Of the mind's infinity
For the blossoms of their Junes,
And the glitter of their thrones!
Love's sweet lament smooths the breast,
To tint the heart with dreams of rest;
While raven coils of meshy tress
Find in beards a happiness
Dearer than the censer's fire
Swinging to the god's desire!
They wake them in a day of red
And gloomy gold, which clouds the head
Of gorgonian statues, there
To look a stern, most human glare
Of countenance upon the throng
Given up to cloud-born song,
Where sweet stars of love, afire
[In the maid an evening star],
Illumine with auroral rays
Of blinding jewels and soft eyes,—
Gemming like bright butterflies
The odored airs, and lighting all
With creations of the soul!

Oh, how terrible 'twould be
If all this flowered life should die!
Where would it go,—this essence fine,
This wondrous, moving life divine,
Which none can tell of to explain,
Which, dying, never comes again!
But leaves a path of ivy-leaves
Through all the universe to graves!
That draws from All for fancy's heaven
All that form, or light, is given?
Worlds of joy, whose tropic beams,
Effulgent with a thousand dreams,
Rain them from a paradise
Of nuptial pictures in round eyes!
Oh, where, when once within the tomb,
Do they circle with their bloom?
As dust? Then spirit is no more
The spirit-tinted, shapely flower,
But a void, whose end is less
Defined the more we wildly guess!

The spreading palms hang long and low
By the fountain's mellow flow,
Dripping with seraphic spray,
That with the lights make emerald day
Through every tropic leaf that sways,
Vibrating to the harper's lays.
By the basin's mammoth rim
The limpid crystal water's brim
Falls smoothly with a dulcet noise,
Echoing the laughing joys,

And the birds of plumage gay
Feed from the hands of those who lay,
Fanned in the breathful cool,
By the palm-tree's languid loll,
About whose tops white clouds of doves
Teach the tenderness of loves.
Venust forms here sink to rest
On the gorgeous soldier's breast,
Who tells of wars and flowing blood
To eyes that drink in every word ;
Frighten from the pictures drawn
To make the maiden's love now dawn,—
Love expressed it all the more,
A lover had been spared by war,
While he, whose heart was in the flame
Of a battle, thought his fame
Brighter in the lingering eyes
Which kissed his valiant victories,
Than in all the king bequeathed,
When with flowers he was wreathed !

Amid the reeds and velvet haze
The hippopotamus strays ;
On his back a dancer climbs,
And her shapely, belled, smooth limbs
Shine against his folds of skin ;
While near the pellucid river's rim
The august soldiers pipe a tune,
Thinking it delightful fun,
While they watch the dancer ride
A beast their spears have oft defied !

Red flamingoes strut and fly,
Flashing in the moony sky;
On the pave the prancing stud
Sniffs afar the battle's blood!
And piles of brass-made trumpets near,
And stacks of silver spears appear
In long rows along the street
That leads up to a mammoth gate
Of iron, barred, where the great
But conquered soldier now does sigh,
With savage broodings in his eye,
And body hung with tiger-skin,—
Awaiting death; are *these* strong men?

Here the wizard of the air—
Whose throne of elements is where
The worlds are born so beautiful,
In shapes to earth unnatural—
Walks him with his pomp and might,
The lamps of men to fill and light,
That arts beyond the world may shine
Their strange, supernal, awful sign!
Like a glass, the scene gives back
Those shades of things the mind calls black,
To make the superhuman seem
Woven into nature's dream.
A wilderness of columns rise
As if to pave the arching skies:
Wondrous paintings on them shine
Of warriors and kings divine;

Strange and weird they grandly loom.
Flowers of the rarest bloom
Touch the ebon sphinxes' eyes,—
Demons in a paradise!
These eerie, stony images,
Gigantean in their awful size,
Appear to meet the wondering gaze,
As the lights gild up their eyes,
With a look so strange and dreamy
That one thinks they saw the dusky
Ages of an epoch when
The world was living without men,—
Living when far mornings throve
Animals of sluggish move,—
Enormous boned, which lived on grass,
Gigantic, in a deep morass,
Where they made dark, frightful dens
To shelter them from deluge-rains!

Where the lamp-light soft caresses,
Dancing-girls with flowing tresses,
Draped in gauzy, spangled dresses,
Dance them like a hundred stars,
Tinkling on the marble floors;
As if the earth was belled with lovely
Spirits laughing out their beauty!
Each like Venus from her shell,
Or like Psyche from her dell,
Where streamlets run and shyly laugh
From having been to her a bath!
Yet whose toilets strike the gaze
As fit the city's towery maze.

Around the head some wear a band
Of diamonds from rich India's land,
While sapphires glitter on their arms;
Ruby balls add to the charms
Of the peerless ankle small,
Supporting all that's beautiful!—
Like smooth marble to the hips,
Rounded like their rose-curled lips!
Their waists are clasped with amber shells
Carved and polished into bells,
While caught into the heavy hair—
Which some in coiléd braidings wear—
The fresh cream lotus from the stream
Nestles for a flower's dream!
Here a beauty, fair of limb,
Clothes her bosom with the breasts
And flaming colors of the crests
Of tropic birds, while below—
A zone of ermine, like the snow,
Holds the dancer's elvish dress
In all its clinging playfulness!
In their shelly, dusky ears,
Golden asps, and gems like tears
Swing beside the nymphly neck
Rising curved from out a lake,
Where passions hide in flooding climes
Of blushes budding wedding dreams!—
Dreams which only fall upon
The fancy, where the tropic sun
Bathes its velvet phantoms sad
In landscapes spread for love, and maid;

Where stilly leaf, and prismy cloud,
And slowly-moving gorgeous bird,
Warm that beauty which is love's,
To give it over to the doves!—
Unrestrained, without a sign
Distasteful of life's sparkled wine!
Here the dancer in her move
Compels the advent of that love
Which, blossomed o'er her every part,
Finds its fruit in youth's wild heart!
And, conscious of her mission here
In this tropic, sensuous sphere,
A wanton freedom seems expressed,
Panting prisoned in her breast!
Like morning draws the pearly dew
From the rose's heart to view,
So liquid, drooping, almond eyes
Glitter to love's thousand sighs,
As his fiery sun spreads o'er
Their fountful beauties, ripe and pure,
Instinct with tempting lissomeness,
And live with female loveliness!
Dancing miracles in moulds
Of celestial, brilliant worlds;
Shaped in every line of love
A dreamer draws mid stars above;
Volant as the antelope,
And bending like the lilies droop,—
Bloomed from flower embryo,—
Watered by great Ammon's vow,
That they shall ever lovely grow,

As daughters of fair Isis 'bove,
And fitted brave Apollo's love!

They dance them to a whirl of sound,—
Hardly touching seems the ground,—
Notes that carry forms as well
As the soul in helpless spell
Out into a land of gay,
Dusky realms of sympathy,
Where their arms, thrown out with love
Soft as breast of cooing dove,
And clasped with sacred scarabee,
Seek a lover's majesty,
So that two might whirl away
Into roses flushed with day,
There to pluck the leaves apart
And find the throbbing, yearning heart
Hiding in the petals deep,
Danced into a dreamy sleep!
They spin around like fairy dreams,
Or like to lovesome sunbeams;
Flashing beauty when they pause
For the people's loud applause;
Their scarfs they wave so gracefully
Resemble wings, and oft they fly
Past to hide beneath the leaves
And bury in cool flower graves!
Meteor, dazzling, moon-loved forms,
Delicious with a million charms:
With almond eyes, whose lashes curl
Around twin, gleamy seas of pearl,

Shading two dark, speaking gems,
Luminous with eager dreams,
Deep with live supernal soul,
Which rules each line so beautiful
T'ward an island—as a mouth—
In a sea of luscious youth,
Which to find would give a kiss
Flowering from worlds of bliss,
Blooming so seductively
The tropic hues of beauty,
That the one who should discover,
Would have all that went to make her!
Any one could robe them there
In her aureole of hair!
Every tinted marble tile,
As they touch it, seems to smile,
While the air they set in motion
Fanned the tingled cheek with passion!
Seems that all the orbs above
Dreamt the birth of each for love,
And that a paradisian essence
Centred in their aerial presence:
For the joy of their glances
Thrills and willows as it dances
Down into the very soul,
To make it, with them, beautiful!
Around them cling the years which add
The lissome teens unto the maid,—
The years that show a line sweet fulled
With the charm of sex rare souled,
And blossomed for the fruit, which eyes
Gather with love's ecstasies!

Like pearl upon the baby lily
Is the smoothness of their beauty,
That from heads of spreading tresses
Shapes it down to tempt such kisses
As do smoulder in the fires
In the prison of desires!
If a creature, scaled and vast,
Such as lived in ages past,—
Ugly, with enormous teeth,
And body of colossal breadth;
Red-eyed, savage; unlike all
The animals that to-day do stroll
Redeemed by some redeeming sense,—
Was to walk its shape immense
To the side of these sweet forms,
What divinity of charms
Would we behold that life had grown
Since creation's early morn?
And what perfection might not we
Give to life's vast entity,
When conceding it a place
In the boundless realms of space?
Lovely as the form is now,
Much more lovely may it grow,
And it seems that this new growth
Is discovered now by youth;
For as the days and nights go by,
Love gives birth to some new sigh,
Born of seeing from its dreams
Softer, dearer, speaking beams
In the stars that guide as eyes
These beauties, like the dulcet breeze

Touches silk that falls from corn
Growing in the freshy morn!
Like spirits that run wild in wine,
Or those that urge the flowered vine
O'er the arbor of sweet spring,
Do they come to softly ring
The tender bells that ever chime
In the land of love's long dream!
Born of music's richest strains
To be the earth's seductive queens!
Like sweet hay, and honey-comb,
And resplendent buds, they bloom
Into ladied maidenhood,
Canorous with the voice of bird.
Voices have they, like the song,
Which wells through twilight's spirits' throng,
Seeking tender sympathies
That are craved from memories
Of some past of youth's wild thrill,
From love's first wild, delightful spell!

Spring-bathed maidens, draped with orris,
Graceful as the kids of chamois,
With smooth limbs oiled with aloes,
And nectar lips that, like the rose,
Gives forth loveliness to all,
While growing ever beautiful!
Creatures of divinest mould,
Suns of every mental world!
So fair above surrounding earth,
That 'twould seem their woman-birth

Meant the end and reason for
All that matter ever bore!
Like warm beams of glorious light
Of their forms in spirit,
Stand they on the world supreme,
Emblems of a god's long dream,
Fair flowers, that the butterfly
Loves to sail around, to see
The upturned eyes, both bold, and shy,
Gazing on them happily!
Spirits of *the* Spirit, sitting
High enthroned, supremest king,
Because of planning for their mould,
That woman-life may bless the world!
Such are women who embrace
The soldiers of a mighty race!
Welcome with alluring eyes
The soldier of great victories!
Welcome for the frantic bliss
Of rich feasts of wantonness,
Where the red wine, and the head
Of the joy-drunken maid
Falls upon the scarréd breast,
To be fondled, loved, and kissed!
They, like melting notes of tune
Changed to women, dance in June;
Winding as one soft, round limb
Of music filled with warmth of them,
About the dream of him who sees
This revelry of form, and eyes!
The substance of their beauty dreams
Its essence out in spirit beams,

Which float into the panting soul
Like angels lithe, and musical,—
Lithe, and wonderful,—who find
Boundless skies within the mind.
The queens of human life's best mould,
Whose glances show where love is souled,
Burning with poetic fire,
Of nature's life, and deep desire
For all that through her mystic growth
Gives love's consciousness to youth!

Balls of flower-blossoms fall
From their stems, and, perfumed, roll
To the feet of those who dance,
With the spring-time in their glance,
With a world all warm with moon,
And sighing with voluptuous June!
Most luscious fruits here wait on lips
Ripe with nuptial half-sleeps,
That could awake, if only taken
'Mid the dusk and heavy, silken
Atmosphere of vernal air,
Abloom with breathful, dreamy hair!
Like the dreams that come and touch
Us lying on a lonely couch,
Come these dancers from a heaven
Thronging with love-thrilling women,—
Come to dally, then to leave us,—
Clothed but with a spangled camus,

Singing little canzonets,—
Love's tender, plaintive amorettes;
Teasing him into a fever,
Leaving him his empty quiver;
Then, when dying from our illness,
Coming with a thrilling quickness,
Taking breath, and giving love,
And lifting earth to lands above,
Where the moon-world leaps with wonder,
And on skies flows all over
With delights past expressing;
Known only to the loving!

Anon they stoop to pick the balls
Of flowers in their playful rolls;
Bending one round venust knee,
To rise with grace and pretty glee.
The one to whom she throws it bright
Is her partner for the night,
And for the time of a life's delight.
Ah, lovely ball, in which a heart
Seems to be thy blossomed part!
Now the air is starred with flowers;
Anon the lovers in sweet bowers
Pick to pieces by the hours
Every leaf, and then they see
That night is laving stars in day.
Heads there are upon the shoulders
Of the sternest of Thebes' soldiers,
Here the captive is well worth
All the battle-fields of earth;

And the battle-ground is rare
With all that makes a captive fair,—
Eyes which show a realm of bliss,
Waiting for a chosen kiss,
Which when given does embrace
The end of human happiness!
Fair, with the garden of her arms
Nectareous with brilliant charms,
Warm with love, that now the dart
Sinks it deep into her heart,
Through the smiles that bloom around
A kiss's blushy flower-ground!
Where do grow the thoughts which steal
Down into the soul to feel
A thousand births of happiness,
Sweet with every gladness,—
Fair as Venus,—felt as she
Looks unto the doting eye!—
With the kiss of starry skies
Breaking dusky in her eyes,
To make the world all flowerful
With the passion of her soul;
For the spirit of the moon
Holds sweet converse with her own,—
Gives her soul its fairy wings,
To fly and drink its dreamy springs.
Thus it is the maiden seems
To intoxicate with dreams
The airy earth with unseen forms,—
A nucleus, unfolding charms
That live the airs, which seem to be
The vision of her entity;

Zephyrs that as halos rest
The contour of her swelling breast,
That combining, perfumed rare,
Float her spell-enchanting hair!
Made of earth, yet moved to fold
The spirits of the stars, and world
About her heart, that they may beam
The aureola of love's dream!
Which for life has strange delight
Here beneath the star-lit night.
On these dreams it ever blooms,
And to its soul enchanting comes,
As sweet honey, all that sleeps
Dreaming as her floret lips!

'Tis in the dance of festal peace
They trip with steps of maids' caprice:
Now moving off ethereally;
Now standing laughing artlessly,
All roseal from roseries,
And bathed in airy vanities!
The dance of war is of the past;
'Twas then these dancers sadly cast
Their looks of timid love upon
The soldier, who, now war is done,
Gazes long and full of fear
That victory may not be here.
To face the weapon of a foe
Was nothing to this chance of woe;

When woman feels her lover safe,
Then she tries him with her laugh;
When danger's over, then her day
Comes for love's uncertainty;
To win its smile the bravest stoop,
And on their knees e'er war and hope,—
Hope if needs be by the sea
Of dreaming of reality,—
Until its chilly rosmarine
Settles o'er a tomb's still scene,
Where the ghosts of hopes forlorn
Smell of mould and anatron!
But few there are among these men
Who love with love that is but vain!
Each beauty dancing love bespeaks,
And in her dance some lover seeks
To show how lovely she can be;
To reward love's victory
She'll dance away and show disdain,
But still he'll woo her not in vain,
For love is like the showers, cool,
Before the harvest bountiful!
The charmful atmosphere of night,
Like diamonds melted into light,
Is full of voices of the earth,
Sweet, and tempting into birth
Soft sympathies in every heart,
That life may be of earth apart!
Every thrill of solitude
Finds the soul's dear plenitude
In a mutual realm, where peace
Reigns supreme from lover's kiss!

No lonely soul appears to stray
Lonely on its earthly way,
But meets beneath the stars' still dream,
And in the palace-dazzling flame,
Some one yearning for its sense
Of life's divine magnificence!
All appear to feel the hour
Omnific with a human power,
Dear with wealth of luxury,
And ripe with all that beauty
Of fair forms of men supreme,
Living deep soft nature's dream!
Through the streets the chariot flies;
Palaces cut clear the skies;
Music dreams along the air;
Barges touch with prows the stair,
That line the water clear and blue,
In which the moon seems laved in dew!
Soldiers cast aside their mail
To set the damask-tasseled sail;
Maidens laugh and dance, and raise
Their lovely arms aloft to skies,
And let the stars sink in their eyes,
To feed anew their loves with sighs!
Life of all the human best
In martial times here bares its breast
For the airs of earth to blow,
And cool its fiery overflow
Of aspirations for the world
Of love, and youth, and strength, and gold!
The king of all, upon the field
Laughed at Death, as, lifting shield,

He saw the foe before him dead,
Lying still in pools of red!
Now, with strength of monarchs' pride,
He'd laugh if Death crept to his side!
The princess for a moment waits
Her barge of colored flags, and lights,
To touch the stone-paved, endless shore,
Surrounded by her knights of war.
Tall and beautiful, supreme!
An artist lover's brightest dream!
As she lifts her limb—like orbs
Moulded to its shape—from robes,
And gazes on the waiting throng,
Her graces thrill the soul like song!
Slaves near—beautiful as she,
Without the robes of royalty—
Wade them in the river's flow,
Where the largest lilies grow;
Ladened with the lovely flower,
They offer them to any comer,
If he prove to be a lover;
Then beneath the water hide,
Which, so clear, reveals a bride
Dressed like nymphets of the sea,
With a necklace made of the
Ruby-tinted coral-tree.

Land of tropic charms, how still
Steals to sense thy ravish spell!
Garden of the temple by
The reedy water's languid sigh!

Garden of the strange in form,
Where each pathway has a charm
Of its own,—a charm so odd
That every object seems a god,
Or a goddess, moving slow
'Neath great buildings builded low
At the doorway of the West,
Pouring light upon the East!
Land of Egypt, flat and warm,
Over which the stars do charm,
From the fancy that they blaze
With a maiden's wishful eyes!
Land of courage fierce, and dumb
To the deadness of the tomb,
Where the blood is like the moon
Rising red into the noon,
Full of dreams of love and fire,
Panting with a lion's desire!
Here we see the flame of life
Burning softly from its strife!—
Burning like a sleepy light
In an earthquake-scented night!
Land of leaping, tropic blood,
Running lava-like to flood,
Shores of heaven-sounding seas,
Purling dreamful ecstasies!
Land of builders, building grand,
Colossal gods upon the land,
As if to show in one great form
Of a sphinx, religion's charm
Unto natures soaring high
For fame of man's supremacy.

World of sweet, ethereous airs,
Bathing dream-invested stars,—
Stars that seem like manés' eyes,
Full of melting, soul-deep sighs!
Home of concubine, and lyre,
Shrine of prayers for war, and fire
Of valor for fulfilled desire!
Realm of fairy, dancing maids,
Eden of long dreamy shades,
Where the sun comes tender, cool,
As the ripples of a pool
To the lissome, stately lily,
That trusts to it its freshened beauty.
Home of men who, feasting, sing
Loyalty unto a king
Throned alone by right of line,
Created by the gods divine!
Heaven of the flowers' joy!
Land where virtue, like a toy,
Brittle as a siren's token,
Is desired, to be but broken
By a maiden's snowy fingers,
While the poet often lingers
To exalt the pleasures fleeting
With a poem to their dreaming!
Paradise of lovely visions,
That drop halos for the passions,
Which seem centre where the flowers
Lay all deadened under lovers
Hiding in secluded groves,
Where perch ashamed the gentle doves!

Land of lions, home of birds
Singing to the lions words
That allure them to their dens,
To be pecked to death by wrens!
World of gold and hell of dross,
Where the soul loves more to toss
On the waves and drown at noon,
Than float it calmly to the moon,
There to sit beneath its sphere,
Satisfied with virtues dear!
World of arms that flock to fold
Good and bad, and young and old,
To a breast so wondrous free
For weak wills that wish to see,
That no mortal born in South
Can resist the smiling mouth
That entices just above,—
Two soft devilets bathed in love!
Oh, wicked Thebes! oh, city fair—
If wicked—as a yellow star
Set in skies that pour their night
Upon thy beamy, dreamy light!
Oh, city like a carmine rose
In zephyr wind that ever blows
Perfume, souled with passion wild,
To touch dark eyes that droop so mild,
That only gods could ever know
Shame, and sorrow lay below!

Land of drowsy insects' song,
Of days as fair as they are long!

Of palms that, like green clouds, o'erspread,
Tropic thoughts too wanton wed
In hearts that throb, while eyes look far
Over phantom shapes of air,
Which come, and go like visions great
Of the world in spirit!
Land of sphinx, with lips that full,
Speaking of a weird soul,
Whose ravish love grows less, and less
The attributes of holiness!
Oh, strange land of heart and form,
Thy charm is like the serpent's charm,
Slow and terrible, yet sweet
As thy maiden's lovely feet
Stepping to a bower, where
Her lover, fresh from some new war,
Waits to clasp her, pure and fair,
In his lion's rosy lair!
World of Egypt's heaven, realm
Of a fruitful, luscious clime,
Where the blush of morn is twin
To the color that, as wine,
Overflows in soft caress
Given to supreme excess!
Land of color, warm, and full
Of life and scenes majestical;
Voluptuous with naturalness,
And rich with every loveliness
That fancy, revelling in art,
Can create to throb the heart!
Through the educated eye,
Which ever sees the unity

Of a gardened-city's sight
And nature, with its own bedight!
Land of gauzy veils, and birds;
Place of frowning, gilded gods,
Of monster art, and gentle moves
Of beauty colored with deep loves!
Of satin walls, and golden shrines,
And purple-loaded, fruitful vines;
Of mirage skies, and human shows,
Of warriors like rainbows
Bright in airs of sounds, like hell
Mellowed with an altar-bell!
Centre of the night and day,
Passing over languorously
In the spirits of the land,
Moving for some high command!
World of lamps, whose rays flood seas
Of passions breaking in the eyes!
Of citron groves, and lakes like glass,
Mirroring the bathing lass;
Of rosy paths, where statues white
Show the maiden, and the knight
Clasped in nature's garb together,
Exposed to all and every weather,
Still united there forever!
Land of low and tender skies,
Where profiles of tall birds arise
Like objects far upon the sea,
Which measure its immensity!
World of stallions, and of men,
Decked with brass and diadem,—

Mighty beasts that human, race,
And look as men do in the face!
That act and prance with fiery duty,
Proud they bear their rider's beauty!
Land of blazing phantom stars!
Realm of riches snatched in wars!
Capital of art and glare,
Reached by flights of marble stair;
Queen of cities, lolling by
A broad fair river, musically
Flowing to the open sea!
Centre of the world of men!
Shrine of flowers—pit of sin!
Thebes, thy glory should have been
Worthier thy name of Queen
Among the races, for thy dress
Ill befits thy wickedness!
It spangles like an angel's wing
That is closed, and trailing
In the dusty paths of ways
Leading to sad destinies!
Thy men believe they ever fly,
Yet they dream them but to die!
There'r shades that now, in dusky alleys,
Which meet in still, and mouldy valleys,
Talking of thy coming fate:
There they throng and silent wait!—
Whispering in fearful voices
Of thy doom, they hide their faces
From thee now, and yet the day
Is not so very far away,

When, sitting on thy golden throne,
Death will cry to thee—begone!
No power ought of thine own will
Seems thy life could ever kill,
And yet *thyself* shall sell to death
The jewel of thy mighty breath!
That wondrous soul which here blooms up
To offer gods its foaming cup,
That they may feast and love with thee,
And so give life divinity!
But lo! what care these men for tombs
In the lights of palace-rooms?

In the rocks above the valley,
Like a mammoth tomb of beauty,
Is a temple, whose approach
Is guarded by the flaming torch;
In their light huge idols loom
Up into the moony gloom!
As if the skies did not contain
Worlds enough to make them vain
Of a life of wondrous birth:
They explore the solid earth,
There to work their human might
By giving darkness blinding light!
Silks bespangled with the star,
Orange flames of altar-fire;
Gleaming weapons, silver globes
Crusted over kingly robes;
Revelry of dance and harp,
Where before was nature's dark!

Luscious life of bacchanal dreams
Blossomed forth in jewelled limbs!
All the wild and tender love
That wafts it up from eyes above,
From the soul upon the open
World outside this temple golden.
Surely they would earth defy
By coming now to where they die!—
To dirges of the ruthless worm,
To show that death is but a dream,—
A mockery to life, a jest
To play with in the living breast!
Sun and world, moon and star,
Water, fire, earth, and air,—
All commingle them, and lay
At the feet of soul their day!
To cheat it, yes; but better so
Than religious, listless woe,
Which imagines caves, where light
Is shining blessings of delight!
Better to go forth to death
With the dancer's happy breath,
Heedless of the morn unknown,
Than to brood, and sit alone,
With the heart aflame with gods
That never hear the songs of birds!

Standards torn in name of fame,
Draped around them like a frame,
Fire the picture with their gold,
And make it rich before the world!

Life seems lighted by a flame
So strange, that for it there's no name!
Here the throne all wealth surpasses,
Like a sunset's cloudlet shores
Blazons high above the dancers
'Neath the ceiling-painted stars;
Down upon the marble floors
Kneel the lowly worshippers,
Bringing many valued presents—
Flowers, fruits, and ornaments;
Lovely slaves in silken garments—
For the king's best maiden-servants;
In long rows the harpers sing
Their mellow notes unto the king,
While the peacock's stately spread
Trails to sweep the monarch's bed,—
He who lies half-courting sleep,
Touching with his royal lip
The gold-gemmed goblet filled with wine
That persuades he is divine!
Anon he feeds the pavone bird
With the sweets he eats—a god!
Folds of gauzy crimson fall
From the ceilings of the hall,
Through which a phosphorescent gleam
Shines a wanton, looming dream,
In the shadows falling there
From the dancers wildly fair.
Golden pendant censers fill
The sheeny mist with odorous thrill,
Bringing pictures with their scent
Of religious sentiment,—

Holy virtues clothed in robes,
Looking down from silver globes
With the eyes of gentle gods,
Lyrical with lovers' odes!
Here, and there, a table spreads
With dainty fruits, and men, and maids,
While in a dusky corner lies
A lion, with his amber eyes,
Over whom, in gorgeous dress,
A warrior leans to give his kiss
Upon the cheek of her, his queen,
Lying in the beast's long mane!
There, against the panelled stone
Of a godhead to the sun,
Rest the dancers fairily,
Panting most voluptuously!
Sipping wine to men who stand
With the salver in their hand.
Gloom here rubies it in wine
To make surrounding, wild, divine,
So the senses feel them rise,
Moving through a realm of joys,
Which, filled with shapes of eerie mould,
Are really objects of the world;
Awe seems love, and love again
Dreams, walking in ambrosial rain,
In which the garden of the earth
Appears self's feeling, tingling birth!
Touching with the soul the flowers
Which hang into our human bowers
From the misty walks of stars,

Where mighty, nameless, unseen powers
Meet to sow the blossom spars
Which grow to worlds, and then to sense,
Of their own magnificence!

In these rooms, divinely vast,
The atmosphere seems overcast
With dark colors, which the eye
Feels to think is color's sigh!
Sombre colors, rich and clear,
Like sunset changing velure air!
Every form reflects their light,
Which never seems to run to white;
Brilliant, like an eve's dull glare,
As though the scene was laved in air
That halos 'round a mountain old,
Burning ruddy, umber gold!
In their lights—the light of all—
The damsel moves like bronzes tall,
With flashing rings within her ears,
That seem the orbits of the spheres
Brought to look as little spaces
When compared to human faces,—
Faces whose sweet smile is like
The lotus talking by a lake,
Smooth and painted with the clouds
Of morning hues, like wings of birds,—
So soft the cheek, and full of speech,
Beyond the poet's pen to reach.
Worlds of color, flung in masses
By the spirits of the Muses,

Shape them of some colors will,
A land of paintings half like hell!
Each hue is like a burning coal
Of a jewel's lustrous soul:
Pictures of strange, fabled forms,
With lovely heads and scaly arms,
And breasts of beauty shaping to
Points of poison all aglow
With crimson tints, as if two hills,
Globous, with delightful dells,
Rose big, and warming with a spring,
Growing flowers with a sting!
Typhonian monsters, bulls, and cats,
Vultures with the tails of rats,—
Beings that bespeak a place
Fit for shame to hide its face!
Here the indian-pipe embraces
Lizards with distorted faces
Of young women dead from kisses!
Halos float above their heads,
Below them cloudy, downy beds,
Whose feet as serpents wind around
Devils lolling on the ground
Of yellow iron thick as space,
And like a field of endless glass,
Through which the world is seen to burst
Into atoms, cold, and curst!
There'r beings pictured here that might
The goblins of the grave delight!—
Beings strange to madness even,
Who take no part in hell, or heaven!

Creatures with one great, round eye
For a head, whose vast body
Is ethereous, so that all
Its organs are quite visible;
And, 'tis very strange to say,
These creatures love all beauty;
The world reflects it in the orb
That, as a head gleams like a globe
Instinct with human dreamy eyes,
And awful with deep mysteries;
We see the soul as it must be
Throughout the body's entity:
We see it first drink in the world,
Then flow like blood of fiery gold
Through the organs of *this* form,
And lo! these organs seems are warm,
With shapes resembling the mouth,
Bowed and crimson, as in youth.
We see the life of this strange thing
Living, as hearts live in spring,
From the beauty and the sense
Of beauty's nuptial eloquence!
We watch, and lo! the blood of this
Creature kills it as its breath
Eats its body up, then death
Shuts the eye, or head, like pass
The mirror streams to airs of space!
And other horrors here we see:
Down in a cave like ebony,
Deep, and papered-like with weed,
Many monstrous crabs do breed,

With backs that shape them like a dome;
They move, they crawl about the gloom,
And claw the dankish, slimy sands
With shapely, tapered, gold-ringed hands!
Their eyes are like two beads on stems;
They radiate a cloud of dreams,
Which light the dark as fire-flies light
The tropic leaf-enfolded night;
They sirenize the dusky gloom,—
These things have wings,—they come
Flapping to the cave's grim mouth,
To crawl o'er gardens sweet with South,
Towards a love-red rippled sea,
Where they wait them for their prey!
Other monsters on the wall
Tell fable stories terrible.
Here a epos, shows a room
For bathers, much like to a tomb,
Contains disrobing beauties, who
Show bodies all an awful glow
Of molten fire, which a bath
Cools to make these beauties laugh,
As they feel and see them take
Forms like to the water-snake!
A spider in whose face romance
Sees all things as in a trance,
Walks around the stars to weave
A web to hold the dusty grave;
Feeding on its mould, he seems
To fatten from his musty dreams!
On a mountain in the moon,
Sits a demon on his throne,

Reviewing swarms of Cupids there,
Playing, diving in the air.
To each he gives a golden shell
Tempered in the flames of hell,
And commands them then to play,
And sound sweet music in the sky,
Above bright beds of blooming flowers,
There to charm for him such lovers
As do know he sits above
In the moon directing Love!
This demon sees a future, where
Venus lies stretched dead and fair,
While the Cupids,—condors fly,
Sailing 'round the setting day!
These awful pictures loom in glares
Of lamps with blue and crimson fires,
Glows which touch the flesh, and eyes,
As Western glooms tint tropic skies.
The idols with their giant heads,
In helmets painted umber reds,
Have hands, if measured by a man,
Would twice his height, and more, well span!
The caps of columns, like great bells
Reversed, have pictures too, like hells,—
Of beings fighting monsters strange:
They stretch along in endless range,
Upholding ceilings, whose whole space
Is painted with the heinous face
Of the crocodile. Here floors
Depict unnatural, awful wars,
Of shapes that only madness could
Express,—the artist some strange god!

Fountains flow, and flowers bloom,
In this world half like a tomb,
Where the loveliest women stroll,
And on the couches lissome loll,
With their arms as free as air
To take a fancy anywhere,
And prove that earth was then afire,
With dreams that might live through its death,
Because of earth's omnific breath!
Ingirt with cycles most sublime,
Rounded with a wondrous dream,—
They dwell in lands where visions blend,
For truth, in every human end!

All is wondrous with a might
Fitted some strange dream of night,
Craving weird, and awful light,—
In things whose presence seems half earth,
And half of some Erebus birth!
Idols loom like Gorgons glum,—
Gorgons from a hunted tomb!
Giving breath to colored gloom,
Infandous as the airs that move
Around them in unnatural love!
The mumbling winds about them play,
With fancies most fantastically,
Like spirits wreathing willowy!
An empyrosis of the scene
Seems to glare upon a queen,
In Venus, as with stately tread,
And lovely tressed incarnate head,

She moves a mirage of the soul
In female form, magnifiable!
A pyramis of life in form,
That might dense rocks of carbon warm,
To give them shapes in diamonds rare
To adorn her ravish hair!—
A beauty of ambrosial airs,
An olio of lovely stars
In swallow-moving limbs, which take
The palace air for some loved neck,
There to ingle sense to see
The wonders of her majesty!
Lived within a realm of dark,
Lighted by an odyle spark
That blazons when the devils touch
Their helly incantation torch,
To the clouds, that rosy lay
In the light of love and day!—
That blazons not alone in sense,
But in arts, whose eloquence
Speaks in strange, and eerie form
To nature amorous and warm!
To nature full of dreamy spells,
Of mighty leaves, and phantom dells
Where flowers dangle on their stems,
And stars are lighted by the dreams
Of lonesome newts and buzzy things,
That give to solitude its wings,—
To commune with tender skies,
Dreamful as a woman's eyes!

As fair, and grand, and strange, and warm,—
More wonderful her ripened form;
A lighty spirit of her shape
From her eyes does make escape,
To hover shadow-like above,
Veilless for the dream of love!
As fires which glow as orange spray
Of the fountain-sun's spread ray,
So her mould in boldness gleams
Against the world of palace dreams;
It rises rosy—made of flames:
A vision that the soul might sell
Itself for unto even hell!—
If the radiant fair real
Should once to love's embraces steal!
If flowers changed to Venus shapes,
When plucked, and tumbled into heaps,—
No sweeter would a crown of them
Be to youth than is her dream
Of spirit in a life supreme!
Touched by all that is so grand
And subtile in a wizard land,
Here sense when full and satisfied,—
Close beside her blushy side,
Defies the gods of wine, and mirth,
To give a feast that panting earth
Would concede excess at all,
So aspiring is the soul
For all that lives it lovable!

Ah, tempter! with thy scaly breast,
In Thebes thou makes thy softest nest!

May gods who love the modest eye
Be charitable to these, who cry:
"Hail! sweet goddess of the night,
Come for dreams that darken light
By comparison to fires,
Burning beauty with desires!
Come as free as morning blushes
To the bending river rushes!"
Bathed in lamp illumed spar,
Life is beauty on a star!
Love is one sweet world of lips,
Where a lunet ever dips
In a sea of throbbing swells,
Breaking into speechless thrills!
Stars with dreams are bright and teeming,
The eyes of love drooped, and beaming
With earth's pictures, painted full
Upon the lustrous, dark, lashed soul!

To some far land in thought they go,
Where objects both for joy, and woe,
Mingle in such mystic ways,
That only pleasures make the days.
The evilly things they here behold
Appear to add unto a world
Delightfully souled and omniform!—
In this strange world of every charm,
Of that which spreads around for sense,
To feel as weird magnificence!
There're fabled pictures on the walls
Which here deny that virtue falls,—

In tempting pictures—paintings bold
For all to see—thus behold—
The woman feeds a rosy snake
That crawls from out a lovely lake
To coil about her waist, it lays
Its ugly head, with serpent sighs,
Upon her arm to look and smile;
In its eyes she sees no guile!
To tropic groves they gladly go,
Where countless skulls on stems do grow,
Dangling in the summer air:
On them still, long locks of hair,
Which flutter in the summer breeze—
Like leaflets of nepenthes!
Here strange creatures hatched in Spring,
Sip them honey while they sing,
And sin-robed demons laugh, and stroll,
With the nimbus crownéd soul!
The bubbling streamlets that here play
Fall over tombs with melody!
Volcanoes flow their lava streams
Beneath the dreamy lolling palms,
Where lovely beings kiss, and laugh,
While taking there a pleasant bath!
The nectar of the roses here
Is dropped from those the demons wear,
As they walk around by night
Circled with a starry light!
Here the toad-stools grow so high,
That souls mistake them for the sky!
And sit beneath to feed the toads,
Thinking they are pretty birds!

Spiders fat with slender wings,
With honey-coated painless stings,
Crawl o'er the ground to feed from hands
Of maidens dreaming in these lands!
Here ghosts of men who fought and bled
Among the piles of savage dead,
Are by marsh-stars ever led,
To a place where shadows play
Bright as sunny breams of day!
'Tis so these men who live sublime
Feel the follies of life's dream;
Yet the end must come when they
Will see it fade in agony!

Love sings through the dulcet air
To a soul-alluring lyre,—
Flies among a crowd of girls
Shaking out his golden curls,
And his body's pink and fair;—
On his brow there beams a star
Borrowed from the angels pure;
And his song is sweet and deep,
To put the damsel in a sleep,
For the dreams of maidenhood,—
Which acknowledge him a god!
The tuneful music of his lay
Is the sweetest song they say!
For his pretty form they laugh,
And chase him down a flowered path;
Then he lingers,—now he's theirs,—
Pressed and kissed with burning fears,—

Clasped to every breast is Love!
The star upon his brow above
Flickers, brightens, then at last
Dies!—and Love's sweet life is past!
Dead between them there he lays!
Apôp now controls their joys.
All love now, *his* songs sweet lays!
He leads to where volcanoes blaze,
To where the roses burst in flame
To cool for Winter's dreary dream;
To where a goddess lets her hair
Make a bower, perfumed fair,—
Whose cushions, made of fairy forms,
Make a couch's easy arms!
He leads them where the world is full
Of wishes that are terrible,
In that nothing can persuade
That they are wanton, where a maid
Might by one long vestal prayer
Wish the wishes dead to her!
He leads and takes them where delight
Is goddess of the starry night,
And so controls the gates to bliss,—
A purer way to happiness,
That in one desperate leap of breath
A lover dives to joy—and death!

The piper in the evening breeze,
As the stars fall down the skies,
Clothed in red, sits on the porch
Around a yellow flaming torch;

Long-legged cranes flap them by
Sounding forth their lonely cry;
A princess dressed in tights of gold
Dances in the moon, while old
Holy priests walk chanting hymns,
Bearing branches from the palms.
Long lines of vapor hug the West;
A glow is growing o'er the East;
Out upon the river pass
The galleys with their prows of brass,
And sails on which the sun is spread,
Painted with great wings of red.
The air is breathful with the rush,
And warm for love's delighted blush;
The moon is round and silvery,
And sails above the city,
Loth to go while lovers stay
Laved in dreamings of its ray!
Through the moony, bluish dark
Bearers bear the jewelled ark;
Streamers float from temples high,
Sacred Apis walks him by,—
The bull in whom is Deity;
Great Osiris, god supreme
Over all the gods sublime!
On a long and gilded pole
The petted asp is praised by all,
And sounding drums and harps precede
Youths who play upon the reed,
Dancing with fair maidens who
Every beauty ravish show;

Dressed in gauzy robes, they praise
The gods beneath the austral skies;
There, among the blazing stars,
They see and praise the god of Mars,
And Diana, Savak too,
And all the many gods they know!
Thoth, Anubis, Athor, Gom*
Appear instarred on heaven's dome,
While the bird, the beast, and flower
Stand as emblems to their power.
Nor do fabulous creatures less
The presence of the gods express.
They write the poetry of the soul
Upon the mighty and the small;
An insect unto them is god,
So, too, the snowy lotus-bud;
The human form to Athor raises,
Apollo in the sun has voices.
And so it is that life and god
Commingle them as in one cloud,
Where Osiris, god of all,
Rules the universal soul.
Thus religion is expressed
In strangest forms, and these are dressed
In human attributes, which draw
The natural world to spirit more
Than if idea only stood
For man's supremest sense of God.

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* Thoth was the god of philosophy and eloquence. Anubis ruled over the spirits of the departed. Athor, the same as Venus. Gom, the same as Hercules.

Such religion feasts the sense,
And, as a certain consequence,
From ignorance of what is law,
Runs to fancy more and more;
Hence the monsters that proclaim
A god of some unnatural dream.
The beetle with the head of man,
The human with a lion's mane,—
Such may feed unnatural fires
And run to carnal, strong desires,
From making weak a moral code
In which is love and one true God!
Like vampires that come forth at night
And fan their victim while they bite
Into a dreamy slumber, so
His awful death he may not know,
They believe and feast with gods
Who come much like these fox-head birds.
In a land of golden-green,
Where art and nature spread the scene,
And pensive, singing, bauble birds
Flutter to the tropic buds,
No thought of what their gods may be
To the real great mystery
Spoils the glamour of their life.
Among their gods there is no strife;
To doubt might put a stronger power
Into the stem of virtue's flower,
For doubt, when honest, serves a need
Where without it damns a creed!
Oh, lovely world of fancy free!
Why should danger lurk in thee?

Thy magic world would touch the land
Where the fates do e'er command,
Yet the evil ever lies
In the glamour of thine eyes,
Which would solve the hidden realms
By the strangeness of thy dreams!

Grandeur human 'mid an air
Filled with all that men call fair,
Breathed by souls ripe within
The breasts of living hero-men;
The senses feasted with the grand
Blend them with a lethean land,
Touched by Western light's dark red,
As though the tints came from the dead,
Making tombs of festive halls,
With living pictures on their walls,
Which, as worlds, break into bliss
Of angels' half-reluctant kiss,
So near to all reality
Appears to them eternity!
The mummied dead they'd brought from tombs
Stand around the feastful rooms,*
By the shadowed column glooms,
As if to show that life defied
The grave the privilege of the dead,
And compelled the buried throng
To hear its wildest happy song!

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* It was customary for the ancient Egyptians, upon great festive occasions, to bring their embalmed dead into the halls of revelry.

The weirdness of this union proved
The senseless, with the lives beloved
Within a sphere of massive show;
Made it seem that here below
Heaven lent its mystic share
To the beauty of the fair,
That living held all powerful
With the earthly sense of soul!
In the shrunken eyes there shone
Reflections of this human sun;
And the loves of those who came
Around them with their blushy flame
Gave unto their memory
So much of what was earthly,
That it needed only breath
To make them laugh at cruel death!
Life's instinctive sense of God
Makes the air, the land, the bird,
The sea, the clouds, and silent wood
Dwellings for the spirit, while
Its favor seeks the dimpled smile
That plays around the lips florescent
Of a virgin 'neath the crescent,
In the court, beside the altar,
Feeding birds with grace and laughter,—
The sacred ibex coming up
For worms within her golden cup.
Here the moon rides bright, and high
In the silver-bluish sky,
While the girl—a floramour
In human shape—all do adore.

The blushy dusk-like silky dreams
O'er the plain of lissome limbs;
The slender waist and tippéd moulds,
Of two hemispheres of worlds,
Covered with a heap of lilies;
The queen-set head and lethean eyes,
That tell of conscious mysteries!
A heart that swells to crimson lips,
Where pearls hide 'way, to come and go
With her song's melodious flow,
And hair for love's most restless sleeps,
Massed in soft voluptuous heaps,
Bound with pin of small conceit,—
A diamond Venus stooping sweet,—
Made against the towered walls
A picture worthy love and souls!
To cause the very mummies' bones
To shake almost against the stones.
From 't would seem a yearning for
Some heaven on this virgin shore,
Near which the gaunt and sacred birds
Came to feed and hear love-words,
Like flowerets dropped from off her tongue,
Strung into a ravish song!
The glare which lights her beauty up
Seems to gild her laughing lip
With the glamour of a spell
A woman might cast 'round in hell,—
A hell of madness in the brain
To touch the beamy fall of rain
That showers down her sloping neck,
Like a cascade from a lake,

Where the waters lay in depths
Fathomless but unto lips!

High above her circled, rose
Titanic towers, in the glows
Of altar-fires, and lamps which swung
From arches pouring out their throng
Of worshippers to this great 'Place,'
Which sweeps its steps unto the base
Of moon-lit statues gazing still
Upon the silvered river's swell,
Where the revellers in bands
Take the dancers' warm-ringed hands,
To help them into curtained boats,
While the harpers' welling notes
Tell that music is to be
Blended with the river's sigh.
Some kneel 'round the altar's glare,
Others sit upon the stair,
Eating fruits from every clime,
Talking of this stirring time;
While up into the wondrous sky
Rise the temples, gleaming high,
Huge, with many colonnades
And winding marble balustrades,
Over which the dancing maids
Lean to look below, with arms
About their belted waists' lithe charms;
In their eyes, the lights and show
Of the revellers below,
In their souls, the fire of life,
And a hidden wish to wife

With such men as built this dream
From the lovely earth for them!
The lover in a leopard's hide
Flung 'round his mighty shoulders wide,
With breastplate carved in gold, and belt,
Where hangs a sword that must have dealt
A hundred times upon the head
A blow sufficient for the dead!
He beside a marble king,
With love and pride commingling,
Stoops, all fired with youth and wine,
To the winning, blushing sign
Of the maiden, to impress
Upon her lips a burning kiss,
While she, with overwhelming bliss,
Falls to his arms with happiness!—
Sweet with perfume, warm and fair,
With elfin arms and tangled hair,—
Complete with femininity,
Charming, live, and blossomy!
Beseeching with her nymphean sighs,
The soul she sees deep in his eyes
For sympathetic ecstasies!
She gives the love the warrior craves;
All her beauties are his slaves!
And the drum and clash of arms
Has for her inspiring charms,
Where her lover wins and stands,
To show her all his conquered lands.
The gold that glitters in her hair,
Almost speaks of weapons bare!—

An Amazon, whom Cupid tied
Willing, blushing, to his side,—
A siren in the camp of fear,
Brilliant, dashing, wild, and fair!
Filled with passions, bold of move,
Coupled with undying love!—
Love which even looks with pride
Upon the heaps of hands which bleed
As ghastly trophies on the floor,
A present to the King of War!
And, as if a savage vein
Of blood of wild, and wanton flame
Ran defiant to increase
The natural orgies of such bliss,
Her eyes undaunted gaze upon
A phallic heap of trophies won!*
In a vision one appears,
To see these lovers, in those airs
That frenzied rush the breath of those
Who stifled in Erebus woes,
So pray for water all their days,
Their tongues melt down their throats ablaze!
She looks to be in this foretold
Vision of their future world,
As if her hair,—each tress a snake,—
Blew o'er his eyes to make him wake
To some half-frantic thrill of love,
That pales all passion, as above

* "A wall-painting in the temple of Medinet Abou at Thebes shows the presentation of a heap of hands to the king. . . . Along with the heap of hands thus laid before the king there is represented a phallic heap."

The moon is changed to fleecy white
Until the day sinks 'way for night!
He clasps her close, and earth's green soul
Is seen, as when we view the whole
Of some star-world in Western blaze.
No human eye might meet her gaze
Unless to keep it on her look,
For in her eyes there runs a brook
Reflecting all the statues dumb,—
To give them voices saying, Come!
To a beauty dazzling all,
To tear and damn an angel's soul!

Demons weird, and wholly grand,
Drop them roses in this land,
Where every temple holds a sense
Of the warrior's eloquence.
The god of sorcery might here
Work his charms and they be dear,—
Work within bewitching groves,
Rings of pleasure 'round their loves!
They touch a wondrous beamy sphere,
As if to demons they were near,
Who, through labyrinths of bliss,
Breathe the breath of sigh and kiss,
Till through ages wings the soul
In strange heavens wonderful!
Death appears it hardly worth
A thought to these who breathe the earth!—
A thousand thrones the soul sits in,
To view the possible to men!

The stars, like little globes with wings,
Flutter to the dreamy things,
That spread them out the earth's expanse
Of all which makes life's sweet romance.
Amun* in the skies above
Is proud of Thebes, and sends his love,
As breezes through the senna-tree,
And almond groves of rare beauty,
Where the sail-embroidered boats
Of dancers land to voiceful lutes,
For feasts upon the lovely green,
Where the moss red rose is queen.
Men live life to see it fair;
Their kings e'en kneel in silent prayer
To themselves, as being part
Of some deity's great heart.
In sun and moon they see a might:
So reverence the day and night;
The human and the natural earth,
Proclaim to them their godlike birth.
In all they are in *all*, then prove
Them attributes of orbs, and love!
Their images but do express
A worship of god-mightiness;
Mars is power, Venus love,
Isis too holds out a dove,
Thoth is wisdom, sense, and truth,
So prized by age, and craved by youth,
Because in human perfect form
They possess for life their charm.

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* Amun was the presiding deity of Thebes.

If the god or goddess take
Some part of beast, or even snake,
'Tis because they see a trait
Such as they would cultivate.
Religion thus would perfect be,
But runs it to idolatry:
If not to idols—then to man,—
To Apôp* with his dreamy fan,
Who must ever linger near,
And lift the long rich webby hair
In his dream-alluring way,
For the sleep of chastity!
Every moment of their living
Is so precious, so alluring,
That their life's allotted time
Only seems a little dream!
Whose last days eternal waking
Should be life at its beginning!
The paths their gay feet tread are ways
That comets, wafted on a breeze
Of flower-blossoms, might have past,
Leaving light in volumes vast,
Whose bright atoms men might take,
And from germs within them make
Worlds of light, befitting souls
Continually desiring strolls,—
Drown new vistas, new and fair,
Bathed in breaths of changing air!
Eidolons who prate of tombs,
And draw o'er pleasure lines, of glooms,

* Apôp was the Egyptian devil.

Seem by contrast to increase
The spring-hued world's bright loveliness!
They stroll them through a fancied way
Of flower-trees, so rich and high,
That if omens should in sky
Show a coming storm, they could
Not be seen behind the wood!
A halo of the mighty sun,
With web-dream wings of silver moon,
Crowns the spirit of the mind;
And their thoughts are like the wind,
As it borrows of the rose
Its fragrant soul of pinky blows.
In wild lands of flowers they
Drink of nectar all the day,
And all the night, when flowers sleep
They remember them, to sip
The honey left upon the lip!
Like swift birds before the gale,
High in air they toss, and sail
In a world of dreamy storm,—
Panting in the lolling form!
All their sorrows pass away
In to-morrow's healing day,
And the earth is one great sigh
For delight that, passing by,
Leaves a kiss for joy that tarries
In the future's pleasant valleys!
The velure fields on which they camp
Are never cold, and never damp;
Life's full spring is never bitter,
Nor freezes it from winds of Winter

Icy with a soul's distress,—
All is calm with songs of peace;
The university of sky
Is ever clear to their raised eye;
No mist of storms e'er clouds the moon,
That shines ethereous aboon:
Each morn is fresh and iridal,
Each eve with dreams ecstatical,
That feed the hot and tellurie
Passions so deliriously,
That a sin soon grows to be
Most a virtue, so divine
Is the sparkle of life's wine!
Odelets are writ above,
Excusing visional, weak love!
All is dear, supremely fair,
For these feasters know no tear!—
Those they know are tears of bliss,—
Dew on buds of happiness!
The tymbal sounds the time to dance,
The cymbal time to lay in trance
'Neath the sighing leaves of palm,
Growing over like a dream
Of the shades of Paradise,
Where their gods they know rejoice.
From the setting, blazing sun
Countless forms of spirits run,
To them bearing wreaths of cloud
From some pleased and worshipped god;
Trumpets sound and lyres play,—
Love is wild with rhapsody,

And claps his hands beneath a heap
Of virtues put to willing sleep,
While the angels weep, and sigh
Over human frailty!

Death brings flowers, it appears,
And morning burning, raying stars
For the brows of fulsome breath,
Ruling beings, whose fair wealth
Of beauty might entice the shades
To make love to such sweet maids!
And often 'neath a sky of blue
These filmy forms do really woo,—
In those dreamy eyes that close,
From soft yellow into rose,—
Looking out from Western lands,
Where two lovers sit with hands
In each other's, thinking on
The joy of the unknown morn,
Where forever they will stroll,
One in all that is the soul!
When this light in eyes of West
Sees the mortal form so kissed,
Surrounded by the weirdest art,
No wonder spirits seek the heart
Which have learned to know the tomb,—
A building brooding only gloom,—
Something like the frowning walls
That arch them over these vast halls,
Where the grandest fancy feeds
From greater fancy born of deeds!—

Born as temples, towering high
Into the smiles of lovely sky!
No marvel life will think at last
That fancied death, is death that's past!
And so it is the mighty lives
Of warriors, and warriors' wives,
Conceive the grave is full of dreams
That offer lamps for mystic flames,
That can ne'er go out as long
As the minstrel sings his song!
Nothing strange, no; nothing odd,
When men believe them each a god!
Beneath the porticos they stroll,
And worship at the shrine of all
Reflected to their earthly soul.
From just this sense of everything—
This belief—they stand the king
Of mysteries, thus solved to see
Their human selves divinity!—
[Many gods they worship stand
For kings who once did them command.]
That allows the passions' fire
To be burnt until desire
Fulfils its heaven, for these men
Give leave to soul to run to sin!
With more enlightenment 'twould do,
But not for these, who only know
The presence of the idol where
All is grand, and warm, and fair!
Where love is laid before the shrine
Of a man who once drank wine

Before their eyes, a kingly lord,—
Now in frowning stone a god!—
A god who asks for nothing less
Or more than prayers for such wild bliss,
As he did loll for on his throne
Of human splendor like the sun!
Love is feasted, love is led,
Jewelled, to the budding maid,
Through the tempting arts of this
Enticing world of strangeness!—
Wonders, startling, stand to guide
The shades of vice unto their side,
There to stay for smiles from those,
Whose breath and lips are like the rose!

Bass-reliefs on wall and arch,
Depicting creatures on a march,
Both strange of form and strange in dress,
Stand out in solemn awfulness,
As the eerie lights embrace
The massive granite's rugged face;
The wingéd sun and ibex-man,—
Figures half like pelican
And half of beings new to earth,—
Making men look little worth,
Dwarfing those who carved the stone
To give the mind a weird throne,
From which to view the mightiness
Of its wealth of awfulness!
Here the statue of great Memnon,—
'Round his waist a lovely zone

Of dancers, hand-in-hand, who kiss
Anon the stern imperious face,
While below the soldiers mass,
Decked with tiger-skins and brass
Helmets, plumed, which soft caress
The lithe-posed limbs so fairily
Couched upon the majesty
Of the granite pedestal,
Relucent in the palace hall.
Vases of exquisite shape,
Enamelled with the asp and ape,
And leaves of lotus twined between,
Loom gigantic 'mid the scene;
In them grow all tropic blooms,
Scenting sweet the spacious rooms.
Flowers seem to burn a flame
Of their odors, like a dream,
As though their souls, with love's delight,
Sought to vision them to-night!
The rose and lily glow with fires
Of united warm desires,
Burning 'bove each brilliant cup
A sweet suggestion for the lip,
That presses on their petals smooth
The dreamy thoughts of love in youth!
Golden candelabras rise,
Flameous, like morning skies,
Sending rays of prism gleams
O'er the limpid fountain's dreams;
These tell a story of the Nile,
Where a little flower isle

Lays upon its beamy face,
Waiting lovers' happiness.
Those who rest them dreamy by
Listen, while the speaking eye
Softens for the bower sweet
To lay at one another's feet:
For hearts will ask to see the dove
In solitudes, in which to love,—
In which to feel, by sylvan streams,
Wrapped only in the stars' still beams,
Where breezes from perpetual South
Play about the happy mouth,
While souls around each other twine,
And eyes reflect fair nature's scene!
Yet here the eye is dazzled so,
There seems no time in which to go
Where the island flowers grow!
Here, where halls of columns tower
Like the papyrus graceful flower,
In titanic forms, which hold
A golden, starry, azure world
Painted like the heavens seem,
To an artist's garish dream,—
A mimic field of spheres, which throng
Above the revelry of song,
And shine a gilded glory for
The skyey world of moon, and star;
Yet where a love sees only art
To fascinate and charm the heart;
It loses in the painted dome
The paths where spirits love to roam

After roses touched by light,
Infinite with sad delight,—
Roses blooming from a sky
Tender with the Deity!

By a goddess to the moon
An elephant slow kneels him down,
Making thus a monstrous throne
For a beauty, reigning well
With her face's magic spell.
Her soldier-lovers throw her buds
Kissed with vows, and wooing words.
Sitting in the brazier's dusk,
Upon one polished, snowy tusk,
Is the one—the heart which knows
The beauty wears his precious rose:
Silently he looks, alone;
Love can rest when love has won!

Who thinks, amid this gala scene,
Of the captive king and queen,
Whose sufferings are measured by
The opposite of all this joy?
Who thinks of pain or sorrow here?
These live them on a mighty sphere,
Whose light absorbs with blinding fire
Every other human star!
Buildings all colossean,
With endless courts marmorean,
Where columns decked with arabesque
Support rich folds of damask

Hanging, which in wealthy swells
Soften mellow altar-bells,
Chiming out the hours for
Men who feast them conqueror!
Elysium of bannered might,
Splendent in the tropic night,
Radiant with all that's grand,—
This marble-palaced, gorgeous land!
All drink some felicity
From the glass of romancy,
Whose bright foam runs over in-
To a sea of dreamy sin,
Islandy with vestal forms,
Coveting the risk of storms!
Here powers deipanous bear
Only what is ravish fair!
Wonders grow miraculously,
Most splendrous, and empery!
And Time alone is satisfied
To lead fair Thebes, its chosen bride,
To the altar of a bliss
Lived amid all gorgeousness!
The Kamsin cools its fiery airs
Miles from all the city's spires,
And falls a lightful, freshy breeze,
Soft with pleasant memories
Of the cascades and the lakes,
Where the great-mouthed laleo* wakes
To glide into the basined streams
That ripple through the palace-gleams.

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* A fish found in the river Nile.

Far out upon the ambient blues
The mirage of the desert grows;
Oases of flowers hang
'Mid the astral, blazing throng;
And, look,—the heavens' souls have found
The spirits' actual blessed ground;
Among the blooms suspended high
Men's earth-bound spirits seem to sigh,
And go from lovely palmy groves
Into the stars, for star-born loves,
While 'mid the worlds, like boundless sand,
They lose them in a dizzy land.

Pillars capped with androsphinx
Hold great weights of flower links,
Encompassing the halls of kings
Rich with all earth's richest things,—
Shining in the palace air,
Like a god-gigantic star,
Of dignity, and grandeur vast,
In a mould of romance cast!
The Nile is turned a babbling stream
Into rooms for those who dream
To rest beside, as though 'neath skies
Of nature's wondrous majesties,
Yet here so fashioned by great art,
That objects grow from some strange heart,
Whose blood, empurpled by the gods,
Grows life that none but tutored bards
Can describe, it's poetry so
Unearthly grand with garish glow,

That when we'd look for soul supreme,
With all that dignity dare dream,
A fairy essence spreads a gay
Glow upon its majesty;
'Round the sphinx the maiden throws
Her arms of tawny, dusky rose,—
Loving all the grand, and yet
Laughing at its gloomy light;
She would the grand arts adonize,
But from thoughts that artilize.
A life of pleasure 'mid a world
Of mountain, great, and gloomy mould,
Best expresses all we mean,
For here walks Love's most winning queen,
Who shares the converse of vast things,
While fanning them with love's pink wings!
They live upon a crater's flow,
But live they only as they know.
The tendrilling of willing arms
Work them incantation charms,
And thoughts upon the Deity,
Emotional, come dangerously
Near to Love in carnal guise,
And blind the holiness of eyes,
Seeking for a God above
Through the vistas of a love!
Not till men become supreme,
May the true religious dream
Mingle with the human best,
Without a danger to the breast;
Religion is the very whole
Of the character of soul!—

As it lives to comprehend
A law of nature for an end
That is humanly a good!
Goblins mingled up with God
Presuppose a law unknown;
Hence it is that, creeds which own
To such fancy must impair
Emotions through a needless prayer
Unto a law, which understood,
Would refine the ideal god,
And purify the moral state,
In which men grow to all complete.
Now, inwreathed in every bliss
Is e'er their serpent-spirit's kiss,
That so encircles all their art,
And the best within the heart,
That lovers oft recline upon
The nakedness of passion's sun!
Seeing through eternal aces
On the stars their blushing faces;
Blending all the great in nature
With artistic portraiture;
Differing much from all they see,
Yet lending life its luxury,
Dozy with its very might;
Empurpling the stars with light
For a dreamy, breathing night,
That eyes may see a ravish bosom,
In two worlds that sweetly blossom
With the tints, and breathful rise
Of their own ambrosial skies!

But the vastness of their world
Falls on angels chill, and cold;
Like a halo all of earth,
Prismed with an eblis birth,
And ordained to float above
The seraphs walking meek in love,—
So high that none would say its flame
Belonged to any angel's name!
With wealth and thoughts which seek the spheres,
Their way of loving knows few tears;
The palace is their day, and this
Is lighted by a wanton bliss!
Espoused by beauty for delight
Of virtues which are weak, the sight
Of Cupid hugging 'bout a flame,
Ravish with a bacchic dream,
Is entrancing from the dress
Taste, and art, give wickedness.
Where the fancy of a sin
Is conceived from wisdom, then
Dangers lurk more fatal than
Those surrounding savage man!
Vice is fond of golden wings,—
With them deeper ever stings:
It flies with dull indifference
Through the airs of innocence,
Yet feeds on the beauty warm;
Let the color'd shapely form
Of the world once strive to charm,
Through ethics weak 'mid luxury,
Rich with every fantasy,

And how often men will kiss
A rosy lip for wretchedness!

An olio of things half known
In images the fancies own,
In volcanic skies expand
For the mind's vast pleasure-land;
And the formed and endless aces
Meet them for immortal places
In the realms of fiery soul,
Where pants the vestal beautiful,—
The beautiful which seeks a vice,
A passport to its Paradise!
Which draws the starry orbs away
From their paths—eternity,
To place them in the lighty eyes
That languish, as soft draperies
Fall them down in teasy folds
'Round live venust blushy worlds,
Which bathe them in the limpid moon
Calmly shining in the sun!
Laked amid the bluey shores,
Whose bright foliage is the stars!
Gleaming in the silver bath,
The bathers woo shy Love to laugh,
And lay him lolling in the arms
Of the moon with all her charms,—
She whispers through the astral night
That those who live in this sweet light,
Live an hour for a year,
And make their beds upon a bier,

Which great Death may carry 'way
While they dream of ecstasy!

The baboon on the centaur's flanks
Feigns to ride with ugly pranks,
And Memnon sits and sees the spheres,—
A chain of lakes, like mighty tears,
Circled 'round a willing dove,—
A virgin clinging to her love,—
Standing on their shores her feet
The wavelets innocently meet.
A rainbow arches o'er the plain,
In flower-tinted, chilly rain:
And its hues appear to blend
With some dark, unhappy end,
Where devilets move the eager eyes
To look through passion at the skies!
Where they laugh at splendors given
Over to their glamour heaven!—
Laugh around the sandal lace!
Touch the modest sainted face,
And smiling help the pleasure hour
Tenderly into their bower,
Where the lilies nest the snake
Imbosomed in a flamy lake,
Whose deep waters burst and run
Volcanic 'neath the petted moon,
Sailing silently away,
Weeping for such ecstasy,—
Mourning out its pearly soul,
For the erring beautiful!

And the pearls from off its sphere
Mingle sometimes with the tear,
That beauty on a silent night
Drops into the grave bedight,
With willows trailing at the feet
Of roses most marcescent sweet!
The happiness of indolence,
Imaginant with dreamy sense,
Wraps 'round the mind; while mammoth art,
Strange and songful, draws the heart
To where surroundings in their form
Sound in the soul, like some lone storm
Of the sea, within great shells,
Crimson lined, to echo bells
Of the solemn tumbled waves,—
Making green and lilac graves,
Before the clouds of sunset lines
For another, caused by winds,—
This second West, when no sun shines!

By the rounded jewelled arms
Sit the apes,* who ape the forms
Feasting on the Orient airs,
Thrilled with love and monstrous stars!
Gigantic leaves of giant palms
Dangle to the fountains hymns,
Whose sweet waters, cool and pure,
Float the lilies all in flower,
Which some 'mid spray and heated light
Curl a chalice velvet white,

* The ape was greatly prized by the Egyptians.

To drink the drops, while laughing gay
Beneath the temple's weird sky,
Looming 'bove a fairy sphere,
Where fountains shed alone the tear!
Where captured treasure from the East
Piles 'round the wonders of the West:
Where lovers place the lustrous pearl
Upon the tall and dusky girl,
Beside an awful god in stone
Glared by lamps, and spectral moon,
And almost speaking out in groan!

Hark! who comes with clanking chain
Through the levant flower rain?
'Tis the prince with all his train
Of shaggy lions, walking by
The side of one whose beauty
Dazzles like the golden sun,
And dreams it like the full-orbed moon!
On a carpet of the lily
Tread the pair with youth and beauty;
O'er their heads a troop of doves,
Cooing out their gentle loves!

Hark! who comes, who steals along,
Waving off the melting song,
And grins behind his drapery
Most merciless and horribly?
None know the stranger as he walks
With muffled feet,—he never talks;

From some far foreign land he comes,—
The land of silence, and of tombs!
They cheer and sing,—he frightened leaves,
And hurries to his charge of graves;
But whether he'll he back, who knows?
None care to think of tombs and woes,
For Thebes is great with life's renown;
So Death departs a stranger lone,
Out along the river's path,
But when away—looks back to laugh!

On their banners coils the snake
In a field of rosy-lake,
Suggestive of a destiny,
Transient with complacency
Lived amid all earthly things,
Holding death in gilded stings!
'Round their gods the banners fly,
Defying angels in the sky,
Who would whisper modest ways
Of living for the after-days!
The wine is heady in the cup,
And reddens deep the wooing lip,—
Girdles 'round the world a zone
Ardent with a fleeting June,—
Brightens up the dimmest star,
Yet shortens summer's lovely year!
A madness that is with all stark,
And panting in a star-lit dark,
Wells it through with shocks of bliss,
Fair bodies as they give their kiss!—

A kiss so trained in wide deep skies
Of human worlds in dreary eyes,
That the timidest of forms
Unveil their paradisian charms,
To revel in a realm where mind
Is swayed by shapes turned into wind,—
So soft with summer's warm caress,
And showers sweet as morning kiss,
That in the soul Love feels to press
The image of youth's loveliness!
'Twould seem as though the heart did beat
From the arched and fairy feet
Of Venus stepping over it!
To hide her in its spirit,—
To hide, and loll, and wind her limbs
About the blood, for blushy dreams,
That vision them in every move
Of youth inspired with wildest love,
When looking in the open eyes
Of the maid for ecstasies!
Then visions of her in his heart
Halo 'round her every part!
Amid the luxury of lights,
Tempered to delightful sights,
The glamour of alluring eyes
Promise overwhelming joys!
Seasons of exquisite sense,
Dead to peaceful innocence,
Grow their fruits of pleasantness,
But to fall in bitterness!
In the essences that thrill
From eyes, to eyes, in breathless spell!

The sacred bull, with golden rings
Bound about his horns, brings
A lovely maiden on his back
Of sheeny, glossy, silky black;
She rides to wade him in the stream,
Where swans by hundreds graceful swim
For the food she feeds to them,
While the sacred beast, it seems,
Feels her smooth and dusky limbs!—
Covered with a silver lace,
That, gathered up about her face,
Makes her dark and pretty eyes
Gleam as though the starry skies
Were peeping out her beamy sighs!
What a picture—with the palms
In the amethystine climes
Filled with winds, that make the dreams
Of the tropic-colored zones
For perpetual months of Junes—
Lighted by a hundred moons!
Here the low, vast temples red
Catch the sun, that, like a head
Of some gleaming god, is sinking
In the West, which seems all feeling,
Just as though the blazoned sky
Was a passion-closing eye!—
Throbbed with life, as the evening
Blows the roses Venus, bearing
From her blood,* does scatter 'round
O'er this garden-bearing ground!—

* The ancients thought the rose had its origin in the blood of Venus.

A land where love and love's desires
Burn away sweet love in fires,
As if, transformed, love turned the moon,
To be burnt, with groan and moan,
Upon a plain where demons pranced,
And yelled, and screamed, and wanton danced
About the orb, like savage tribes
Dance about the tortured lives
Of victims taken by decoy
For sport at price of agony!
Ah! horror only—horror 'tis!—
When beauty stoops to give her kiss
Upon big lips carved out of hell!
And red with ever-burning spell,
Crimsoned over teeth that part
To cut asunder head and heart!—
Thus to feed a gorgon thing,
That, eating, grows a monstrous sting
That might be waggled by the world,
Walking on four feet, so cold
That even space would freeze and die,
To bind in ice the orbs of sky,
So that some vast god to come
Might find a universe all dumb,—
And the reason for the same—
In the great translucent dream
Of beings frozen whole and still
From the ending of the spell,
Which the leaping almond eye,
Drinking in the ecstasy,
Knew would end a misery—
Seen by all that might been good
Enough for any virtued god!

The god who rules the future sees
Many tears and agonies,
And faces in posterity,
Whose silly smile, or melancholy
Mark a life deformed,—the price
Of a long, delirious kiss!
Ah, demons! thou who play beside
An unringed, weak and willing bride,
Thou art very, very smooth
In this land of tempting South!
And thy lips are soft, until
They open for the flames of hell!
Thus it is when they confess
Their rapture laved in wantonness
The stars of heaven tremble down,
Like tears set 'round a broken crown!
His arms enfold her,—gently fold,
And bear her to a ravish world,
Where passions waste them soon away
In cries, and sighs, and melancholy;
A strange, sweet gladness growing mad,
Because the end is ever sad;
Like as though by some lone sea
The youth sat bowed in agony
Over one whose form lay still,
Drowned by his and her own will!
There is a great and wondrous charm
In thus enjoying the harm!
A fierce, unnatural worshipping
Of beauty, which is giving
The short, dear hours of a night
Slowly killing life's delight!

They die together, drinking in
Their mutual being bequeathed to sin!
Each new delight they tempt to birth
Dies along the twilight earth;
As nights depart, he makes a prayer
To leave a tear upon her hair!
Then sinks upon her injured breast,
And seeks for pardon from the blast!
For her, himself he'd slay to bring
A balm to take away the sting!
With haggard eyes and trembling frame
He calls her by her virgin name,
For love's dear sake, and truth, and right,
Which alone gives health and life,
And all that honors—honors wife!

'Tis so they live to drink and feast,
Lying on the pinky breast
Of a love which magnifies
Passion in their eager eyes,—
That pleases while it surely kills
At last the mind of all its spells,
To leave at length, when all is done,
A deadened nation for the moon
To pale before, and sigh that they
Could not have seen in its clear sky
More of soul and less of form,
And so have passed the passion-storm:
To sail along the shores of earth,
Leaving ever-blooming birth.
And yet no sign has shown it
Of the coming utter night!

Perhaps they'll live them on forever,—
Live to always pleasure gather
From the flowers, like the bee,
Bury in a honeyed sea!
Never wading, plunging deep,
Feasting ever lip to lip!
With their eyes that stellify
Beauty given up to die!
Ah! will they live them on forever,
By the languishing, smooth river,
Amid their vast magnificence
And the awful eloquence
Of their arts, so grand and strong,
Breathing out their mighty song!
Can't we say, when all its sounds
Settle on their flower-grounds
Open to a trespasser,
Who e'er comes at last to those,
Who, kissing, kill their fragrant rose?

A light from some unnatural dome,
Where eblis angels dance at home,
Beams to sirenize the air
And fill it with a trembling tear,
That, suspended, will not fall,
Yet tempts and teases so the soul
With lovely tints sirenical,
That men at last bathe in its hues
Of valley-breeding evening dews,
To find a subtle joy within
The melancholy song of sin!

Would that they might stop to see
How the demons laugh with glee,
As Death comes in upon their dance,
Approving with a pleasant glance,
To be crowned within their home
With a coronet of doom!
In their Pandemonium
Many vistas from the tomb
Lead up to an ebon throne,
Where the jans before king Death,
Report the strength of earth, and breath.
Alas! the messengers are coming,
And the council now is summing
Up the record of the year
Passed within that roseal tear,—
Lived within that charmful sphere!
Could they see between the good
And some fair, voluptuous god,
Who tells them life is e'er a bower
Of purple petals downed with flower,
Perhaps, great Thebes, to-day we'd see,—
Who may solve *this* mystery?
This they know, that Pleasure's feet,
Free to come, are very sweet,—
Very beautiful to see;
If the wind is pleased to play
With her ample drapery,
They scruple not against a breeze
Nor turn away from modesties!
Believing that their end must be
A paradise of all they see,

They loll upon the couch of bliss,
Trusting to Osiris
For that day beyond the tomb,
And never think it dark with gloom,—
Dark for all philosophies,
And ever growing mysteries!

Here life an arch lifts high above,
With its key-stone of a dove,
Bearing on its wooing wings
The head of Venus crowned by kings!—
Monarchs of the earth who'd brave
An hour's pleasure 'gainst the grave!
Whose voices ring with pæans loud,
As the kingly thunder-cloud
Shouts the spirit of the sea,
Roving wild around the sky!
Corrupted by their evil gods,
Who prophesy them pleasant words
Of privilege to passions deep,—
Those fair Virtue puts to sleep!
Alas! the veil so sleazy lays
O'er her priceless modesties,
That beneath the wanton eyes
Of the siren smile and close
In suppressed, bewitched repose!
Now the sybaritic airs,
From off the venus-chanting stars,
Touch with lips so sweetly warm
That weak Virtue thinks no harm,
And so the roses fade, and die,
In the land of by-and-by!

While their petals now appear
More lovely from a chance of tear!
If their fall it is to come,
'Twill be because their human bloom
Cannot withstand such moral codes
As thrive where supernatural gods
Bespeak a government whose law
Is based on strength of lust, and war!
Morals so deposed confess
To ignorance, and wickedness,
And art becomes a monstrous show,
Fashioned by a slave's deep woe,—
An art that time must soon destroy
To make the world's long history!
Now some religions strive to prove
Their own by others, from above,
When nations, disbelieving them,
Go out in history like a dream;
Little thinking *theirs* may be
But a step advanced to see
In time their own—a fallacy!
For God, unless believed in all
The natural universal soul,
Develops crude idolatry,
And this, in time, to anarchy
Of every human perfect state
Of matter, and its spirit!—
A state which Thebes conceives her own,
As hers forever, and alone!
But the very idol's eyes
Stare the gloom of darkened days,

As if to prove to men by sight,
The weakness of their rash delight!
And this through works they raise on high
As typical of majesty!
The weirdness of this state of art
Awed the social, tender heart,
So that natures craved the glare
Of a public, festive air;
Refinement, such as grows the sense
With devotion's eloquence,
Veiled it with carnality
Before love nestled to its joy!
Here cruelty to men's defeat
Knew few charities to meet
The sorrows of a helpless heart;
Wide gentleness here lost its part,
And only in the carnal form
Did the woman lend her charm,
While the poetry of her soul
Left its power o'er the whole
World of those who came, and went,
To centre in the ravishment
Of those themes that best gave praise
To the story of her eyes,—
Telling temptingly that love
Showed its life and every move
Only where the fountains play,
Which love the night, and shun the day!

And so the days and nights go by,
Wreathed with every vernal joy,—

The days, all golden with the sun,
And bright with blossoms blessed by June,
Rich with blue, in which the moon
Waits expectantly to come,
Paled above each royal home;
Nights, when birds stretch far above,
While the moonlight sings in love
To their gleaming, feathered lines,
Which, like harp-strings on the winds,
Cross the far unknown skies,
Framing them in spacious seas!
Years have made the city strong
With riches and melodious song;
Fame is tired of making crowns,
And building monuments of stones!
The harvest comes, but never goes;
Flowers never know repose!
Death, who once did quietly come
To turn away into the tomb,
Seems will never come again,
With his silentless and pain
Following in endless train!

So lies fair Thebes, old, sublime,—
Old with all but stooping Time;
The crystal skies of stella gleams
Veils her with soft, languorous dreams,
And like some silver world she lies
In the bosom of the skies!
Through the halls the harpers sing
That she is mighty, and her king

Is near to great Osiris now;
Hardly need he to him bow!
Gay the plazza where they dance,
Along the river, in a trance;
Down by the shore, in bluish haze,
The papyrus bends before the breeze,
And phantom boats come and go
From out a velvet, fairy glow;
The moon sheds down a fleecy light
To warm the picture in the night;
The stars dome over her a shade,
As if to keep her from the dead,—
Form a nimbus with their beams
Of a labyrinth of dreams,
Which, as a vast and lovely crown,
Comes to her marbles in the moon,
Slowly, grandly, regally down!
The new-bathed damsel hammocked sleeps,
With the star-beams on her lips,
While pearly drops from out the Nile
Trickle 'round her dreamy smile!—
Instinct with love, which blossoms from
The heavens in their sweetest form!
Anon is heard the tambourine,
Then low music from a shrine
Lighted by an iron lamp
Hung in scented vapors damp;
Damask hangings catch the breeze,
And flowers fall as if from skies!
Men and women tell their loves
In the halls and palmy groves,

Where monuments of massive men
Tower up to heaven!
Great as this most favored hour,—
These statues to vast Egypt's power;
'Neath their shade the orange grows,
And lovers in their royal clothes
Sit peacefully and watch the sky,
With blushes from a silent joy,
And worlds send down a spirit-glow,
As lips tell all that life can know!
Gardens, fountains, splendors ease,—
A fairy-land of all beauties,—
Valor, vice, fame, and song,—
Mighty things mixed with a wrong!
Love and marriage, war and peace,
Within her walls,—a paradise!
Like her men, rich and strong;
Like her women, fair with song—
Is her picture, lying there
In the crystalline soft air;
With pinnacles that do aspire
To catch the pure puissant fire
From the stars, and so be plumed,
And so be lifted up and loomed
Above the earth, that seraphs may
Rest them on their holy way!
Could Death here place his foot of doom?—
Death, who lives within the tomb,
Death, who crumbles even stone;
Who loves to sit and think alone,
And count upon his fingers, bone,

How many worms 'twould take to eat
All that men call grand and great?
Why life, its city is earth's real breath,
Where would they go, and *who* is Death?

Through the spacious painted halls,
While feasts go on, sweet music falls
On the ear like tender dreams,
Dreamt by summer-laughing streams,—
Sweet music,—the sweetest, with the last
Bar discordant falling past!
If men now living would give ear,
'Twould sound to them clear and near,
Like winter winds around the moon,
Or like to feet of muffled bone,
Going down a garden home,—
Going down a garden lone,
With the lotus flower home!
To where the nights lonely moan
'Round great bells ringing groan!
Thus the note that passes by
Tells fair Thebes she has to die!
The mouldy dews from silent tombs,
Where the mystic moonlight looms
Fantastic o'er sequestered pools,
Hold a carnival, as ghouls
Whispering illusively;
Telling one dark prophecy,
Then as ghosts of countless birds,
Speaking cries of omened words,
They secrete them in the reeds,
Where the water serpent breeds!

That pall which floats among the stars,
A mantle of decaying airs,
Scarce appears to have had its birth,
Yet falls invisible to earth!
Anubis bends his spectral gaze
Upon the stormy brooding skies,
And the lightning in his eye
Tells of coming terrors nigh!

From out each star that pales above
Spectral women come with love
Draped about them, in great folds
Of marble iciness, from colds
That freeze a tarn within a valley,
Down in space,—a frozen sea,
Where run from worlds the vernal streams,
To make this pool of icy dreams!
Dipped these women's robes have been,
In this under-land, called sin!
And coming now from all the globes
With their clinging chilling robes,
They cause the warriors in bands
To hide their eyes on earth's night-lands;
Where in famine filling weather
These *once* maidens, crowd together,
Knowing one dark word as never
Known to their joys before.
These were dancers, and the floor
Of flowers echoed oft their feet;
These were beauty's offspring, meet
For every earthly blessing sweet!
Now in lines they slowly move
To gaze upon the form of Love,

Frozen still, and dead—at rest,—
Hovering above his breast,
A nimbus from a light of West
Hidden by the swarming shapes
Of demon-eyed, and wingéd apes!
One by one, these woman forms,
Once so ravish with sweet charms,
Stop to ponder by Love's bier,
There to drop a tragic tear.
As they leave, they hold a token
Up to God,—a harp all broken;
And its strings they get in tangles
Round and round, their robes and ankles!
Oh, how pitiful to see
Their eyes raised up to Deity!
Now each tumbles to a place,
Where the moon lays on its face,
Smoking up a pearly curl
Of a phantom of a girl,
And in an awful atmosphere,—
An air all hollow with great fear!
They wait, their spirits filled with fright,
Expecting some unearthly night!
One by one, the warriors near,
Who go with them to *this* air,
Break their shields, and gleaming spears,
To curse the glamour of the spheres!
Oh, saddest fate of every fate,
When mortal knows it is too late
To live him o'er again the past,
And he its gifts makes bold to blast!

Thus to curse the life that heaven
Kept giving him 'gainst all he'd given!

Through the air the beetle wings,—
Egypt's sacred sign of things,—
Giving all a drowsy charm,
Until the lights attract for harm!

The darkness grows,—the pall is near,—
It is coming,—*it is here!*
Ah, fly not, insect of man's fame,
To burn thy wings in Death's weird flame,—
Insect sacred to his sense,
Of the god's real presence!
The night is full of sleep,—'tis still,
The flicker of the world hath spell,
The beetle in the light hath flown,
The shade with muffled feet of bone,
Which down the garden walked it home,
Meets them by the lonely tomb;
He who laughed upon the river
Returned to lock them all together!

The feasters sleep,—long they sleep,—
And their rest is sound and deep!
Oh, may their slumbers peaceful be!
To wake would be but agony,
Unless to wake beyond the chance
Of the sight of Death's wild dance!

Death loved beauty for his bride,
And kissed her so her fairness died!

Upon his hollow bony breast,
He drew her towards life's lonely West,
Breathed upon her startled eyes,
Raised to his in agonies!

Oh, the wedding,—ah, how still,
Silent, nether, damp and chill!
And the flowers,—ivy-leaves
Emerald with the hue of graves!
And the nights,—oh, the nights
Lighted by unknown lights!
While the bridegroom calls his troop
Of waiting worms to come and sup!
'Tis well the living cannot see
The throng crawl in like some dark sea;
'Tis well, alas! 'tis very well,
For *here* is Death like unto hell!

The glories of great Thebes appear
To be breaking now in air;
The draperies are gathered up,
And here and there a jewel cup,
By unseen things of awful mould,
Moving o'er the palace world.
The lions die, the armors rust,
The flower-vases fall in dust
Before the presence of these things,
Flapping with the grave's long wings!
Like bats they sail amid a night,
Where moon and stars have lost their light;

Splendors vanish, lamps die down
Their blazon flames, and winds moan;
Temples totter, fall to ground,
But not with crashing, thudging sound;
Time lays gently on his hand,
And temples crumble into sand!
Those who sleep have faced a morn
Which gilds the sealed, and dripping urn!
And through the mist a mighty mass
Moves ever onward now, to pass
Over that unseen, lone river,
Flowing ever, ever, ever!
Oh, the music they must hear!—
That epicede which wraps a star
In dreams of unknown destinies,
Out through all infinities!—
Notes that fall like some strange spell,
Half of heaven, half of hell!
Clinging, binding, love-dear, blest;
Drawing, tearing from a breast,—
Oft we dream a chord, when by
A maiden 'neath a westerning sky!
Thrilling, crashing, grand, and sweet,
Death and flowers at our feet;
Strange and awful, loud and low,
To pass the body and overthrow
The charmed and terror-throbbing soul
With the cruel beautiful!
We feel it when the glories fall
Off from stars so wonderful,
And oft when contemplating God,
Thinking death to life so hard!—

Music which appears to dwell
In lone towers, where a spell
Of ivy and of dampness twine
Together an enfolding vine,
In whose windows fancy sees
Lovely forms in agonies
Of parting for a tomb beneath,
The tower crowned with ivy-wreath.
We hear it when alone above
We travel after ideal love;
When 'tis ours, and danger comes,
Love seems then to break earth's tombs!
Yes, we hear it as the word
Of an awful, human God!
We feel it in redounding seas,
Mourning mighty symphonies,—
In the lightning, in the breeze,
And in the poet's instrument,—
The soul's divine accompaniment,—
Speaking of each lineament
Of some dear face we love to love,
Fearing that the spheres above
Love her even more than we,
Never fearing, happily,
Yet with longing's—mystery!
Which allures us while we dread
To think that life cares for the dead!
Who, while living deeper dreams,
Has not heard these souls' great hymns?
Now falling as omniscient light
On these spirits in their flight
Through an intervital night!—

Never hearing well, but then
Feeling all the notes have been
Grandly sacred somewhere far,
And echoed to each feeling star,
Till we, with our destinies,
Interpret them eternities!
Now their sheeted spectre ears
Hear this music without fears,
Which in life did pass them by
Discordantly into the sky!
Yet which now has subtile charms
To make each ghost stretch forth its arms
To be taken, taken *there*,
Beyond where Death stands in despair,
Just upon the border-line
Dividing earth from things divine!
Oh, the strangeness of these notes,—
Each a destiny which floats
To the ears of every one
Walking from the other lone!
'Tis the harp of love and God,
Which no spirit e'er withstood!
Whose strains are those which mightily
Blend the All in unity,
Revealing God from mystery!
Yet to live,—this melody—
This music of the Deity—
Only tempts for states unknown
In sympathies of monotone.
We may hear the echo dim,
Simply as a human hymn,

But the grandeur, and the awe
Of this symphony of *law*,
We shall never hear until
The ringing of the funeral bell!

Oh, Death! thou took them as the night
Falls o'er a flowered summer light!
Why so dismal didst thou come?
Why so dreary, ghostly, dumb?
Must life's last evening, like the sun,
Set to fill the world with gloom,—
Set so mortuary lone?
If this be so, why can't we see
The rising of the after-day?
Alas! 'tis true; those who rest,
To sleep, to sink behind life's West,
May *never* rise, unless to see
What to earth is mystery!
Alas! that Fate should ever doom
The soaring soul unto the tomb
To be born again; for, lo!
The grave is all we'll ever know
Of where the happy living go!

In some far realm within the sky
Sad-souled minstrels, in their lay,
Tell to starry lands unbound,
That life is sad wherever found!
Because so helpless in the all,
So weak to know its own weak soul!

And these minstrels seem to call—
With requiems poetical—
Around them every life that died,—
Not to cheer or act as guide,
But to sing them songs of tears,
Whose notes, unechoed, are like prayers
We pray to vast eternal airs
That never answer us, who cry
In adoration to the sky!
Slow and solemn, one by one,
The spirits join the minstrels' tune,
With their voices weird and lone,
Till a wind of melody
Blows o'er the land of mystery,
Wafts sad, and plaintive out for God,
To say He hears the brotherhood
Of souls now left to utter night,
Unless He lights with holy light
A heaven for their eyes to see
The meaning of eternity!

In the universe we are;
Dead or living, here or there,—
There, where death is like a sleep
In the universal keep
Of all, we are, and this
Is all we know of God or bliss!
And how small to things of space!
What a little ace of ace!
In danger of a passing cloud,—
A trembling atom, yet a god!

A god dependent, now a slave
Of the dark and cruel grave!
Alas! 'tis hard for us to say,
Where all is one vast mystery,
Whether life is saddest or
Death of it for evermore!
Life may, like the kingly sun,
Go down for night when day is done,
And soul exclaim, what countless spheres
Were hidden by the noonday glares!
But to us, who judge it so,
How far away the stars do glow:
A million worlds and more we see,
Yet all their light is less than day!

PART II.

WHERE Egypt's kings with ancient gold
Built them thrones to rule the world,
Vast temples carved with their deeds
Crumble ruin in the reeds!
The sculptured ibex, the sun with wings,
The granite forms of gods in kings,
The asp,—the snake Eternity,—
Lie in the sands a mockery!
And silent groves of palm preside;
From their shade the desert wide
Melts into the Western sky
Of saffron lined with ruby.
The vampire, and the owl, go by
Between the horning silver moon,
And mighty Thebes—a heap of stone!
No more the laugh of life, no more
The song of love, the cry of war!
The temples built for human pride
Lie broken by the river-side!
Gray-faced columns blasted stand,
With their friezes in the sand;
The vast arcades they held on high
Lie ruined 'neath the moon-lone sky;
Entablatures of massive mould,
Corniced 'round with chiseled gold,

Mingle with the sandy waste
And dust the subtle serpent's nest!
The mournful vacancy of plain,
Where once fair Thebes proclaimed her queen,
Stretches, covered here and there
With blackened ruins, marking where
The city spread in days when we
Might have heard a murmuring sea
Of voices from the valley,—
Then verdant with magnificence,—
Alive with pomp, the residence
Of kings who loved the force of gold,
And the chariots that rolled
In processions grand, and gay
Through the streets of majesty!
Imagination seems to see
The gorgeous funeral pageantry,
And the legions pouring through
The hundred gates, to overflow
The palace-temples, with their spears
Gleaming in the balmy airs,
Cheering Thebes, and bowing down
To the winged world of the sun!
Now we, startled, ever meet
On the plain, where ran the street,
Awful pits, where mummies sleep,
Tens of thousands buried deep!—
Beneath the very ground they trod,
Bearing jewels to some god,
Along the avenue where stood
The massive sphinxes couched in pride,—
Each some demon's awful steed!

In this room, which once was one
Dedicated to the sun,
Behold the looming, broken splendor
Of a ruin called now Luxor;
Mark the heap of dust piled high
Against those stones to Deity!
Here the gayest of the throng
Danced and sang their festive song;
Here the dancers rested, while
Sipping wine with laugh and smile.
Now from this great statue's form
We may knock the fine dust from
Between the chiseled cracks; it drips
The echoes of voluptuous lips!
Mark the solitude, and ponder
On this desolate, vast wonder!
Once the music of the king
Made this desolation ring!

A little farther on we come
To the portal of a tomb
Deep within the mountain's side,
From which we view the valley wide.
Break it open; look within;
Here the hands, on aged dead men,
That put these monstrous stones in place!
Ah! could we Time's long path retrace,
And ask them *how*, face to face!
Now they lie so helplessly;
Long they've lain thus, silently,
Amid this solemn grandeur, lone,
Of wondrous sculptured, painted stone;

Vast, indeed, with silentness,
Groanful from its darkness!
Yet, behold how rich the dead
Lay 'mid all that is decayed,
As though their lives they prized them so
That, even dead, they tried to show
How great it was to live, how grand,
To men who owned aged Egypt's land!
Here the gorgeous tomb displays
The wealth and might of long dead days,
And on the walls we sadly trace,
In images of awful face,
The journey of the buried soul
Out to heavens beautiful!
Mammoth are these ancient tombs,
And dark their lonely, rocky rooms,
Where in mocking finery
Lie the bones of royalty;
Rest them in this emptiness,
Dumb to all life's consciousness;
Their names engraved in deadened words,
As well as those they gave their gods!

Here an idol—some supreme
Godhead of a lofty dream—
Stands deserted and alone,
With a countenance of stone,
Surrounded by the stilly dead,
In an atmosphere, like lead,
Black, and full of nothing seems
But the Eidolons of dreams!
Here the idol, like the skull,
Breeds the dumb and horrible!

Even adding to the gloom
And lonesome terror of the tomb!
O'er its face a dusty veil
For Death's wedding festival!
No more a god upon a throne,
But a goblin turned to stone!
For men have looked beyond the clouds
Since the days of Theban gods,
And conceive a *better way*
Of *dreaming* of the Deity!
Better, but no nearer to
A clear, unclouded, perfect view
Of the meaning why the earth
Should allow them life's strange birth!
If they had more knowledge gained,
Ruined Thebes would be explained!

Oh, Soul! which leaves this body here,
To mount into the endless air,
Why leave the wreck alone forever,
As thou hast left it by this river?
Give us but one little word,
Then we'd know *now* what means God!
But, no; while earthly, thou dost seem
To give the remnant of thy dream,
Which ever will—we cannot help it—
Seek the grave to know of spirit!
When we leave *this* desolate land,
Youth, with gay yet weakly hand,
Waves thee where we understand

Only life, and life ne'er gleaned
A glimmer even of its end!
Look! beneath this skin-dried skull
Lived the power of the soul!
Here dwelt ambition, love, and pride.
We call life gone, we say 'tis dead;
In saying this, we mean no more
Than though we said it lived before,
To move about for peace, or war!
But what a world of beauty throve
Within this bone from springs of love!
What understanding! for in here
Was the earth in miniature!
And the heart, a spirit, walked
Through this garden, sang and talked
To all it saw, while fancy wove
Each object with a fairy love,
Which the heart saw like the earth,
Only of more lovely birth!—
To take unto itself and keep,
Whether waking or asleep!
Thus did the soul with poetry wake,
Its own fair consciousness to speak!
What lighty heavens dawned within
The bony dome of this dead man!—
Heavens where the bird and bee
Winged them in light fantasy
By a fairy vision's sigh,—
A face with eyes like to a dove;
The beauties of the world, and love,
Blended here their souls in one
Little sphere for self to own!

And, oh, how precious were its skies,—
Its dreamy, spiritual seas,—
Its flowers, ever twining fair
About a face that seemed its air!
What bows of hope and fears of pain,
And life's desires for golden gain!
What fairy faces, smooth, flushed forms,
Danced in here, with their young charms,
Filling all the body sleeping
With their very ravish being!—
So that if the world was gone,
The mind *might* move the world alone!
What power dwelt within this dome,—
Power that came forth to loom
Its fancy far above the world,
So far, that all the stars did mould
One chosen face, whose lips of red
Could speak through love, when pale and dead,
In long posterities of being
Fitted for like wondrous dreaming!
What a kingdom spread it here
'Neath this skull, which soon will bear
The fateful evidence of time,
And be blown o'er every clime!—
Its particles a part of all
The earth it pictured beautiful!
The skies it felt, the ground it saw,
Transformed by time and natural law,
Have found their actual shapes upon
The real green earth held by the sun,
And, blended with all unity,
Resolve them in that mystery

Which holds the secrets of the soul,
Mingled with the living all!
But that essence which built up
Every beauty for the lip,—
That transmitted love's dear thrill,
We may ask the world to tell
Where it went for evermore,
And be no wiser than before!
We may cut the atom, then,
Cut a thousand times again,
Ponder on the galaxies,
Numberless, within the skies;
We may reason, build our dreams,
On the mountains, by the streams;
'Mid the hues of season's change,
Take the whole fair earth's great range;
Mount unto the very poles,
Where the iceberg piles and rolls;
Plunge into the central heat,
Rise where airs fly chill and wet;
Soar up to the spheres above,
Pull to pieces tender love;
Seek the bottom of vast seas,
Look at tiny entities
Moving with a fitted life,—
All is chaos, all is strife,
When contemplating this lone place
Of the soul's great emptiness!
Once as far as men could see
Stretched the templed majesty;
Solemn in its massive state,
In airs that, like an opiate,

Filled it for ecstatic dreams;
On the walls the mighty names
Of those who honored only gold,
And beauty blossoming to fold
The jewels 'bout its being, tall,
And so be e'en more beautiful!
Miles of polished steps led down
To the river, while the sun
Spread among the gardens fair
With every tropic flower rare;
And now no flower dares to bloom
Beside the fairy hall, a tomb!
The gilded barge has floated by
To the sea of mystery,
And the daughter of the king,
Lying 'neath the wivern's wing,
In some sepulchre remote,
Knows no more her gorgeous boat!
Death did help her to the shore,
Took her hand, his tender flower;
For the vessel floated only
On *his* river, long and lonely!
And the drapery, which flowed
As they sang, and drank, and rowed,
Rested on the pleasant stream,
Only pleasant in a dream!
The lute has ceased its loving call
To the tingling, happy soul;
The stars that whispered to the fair
Tell us not that they are *there;*
They knew no more than we to-day,
Who float along the same highway!

The lotus buds it as before,
Yet deadly perfumes seem to soar
And mingle with the misty pall
Floating as the river's soul.
All the lights along the shore,
Which shone upon the water's floor,
Like tall angels moving out
To board each song-enfolded boat,
Have gone out for evermore,
To leave alone the mirrored star!
Taking with them all who knew
There was a world most fair to view!
The eyes so bright with living things
Flowed out their thoughts like liquid springs,
Until the waters dried them dead
Beneath the fringed, and tired lid!
The valiant soldier soon rose up
From his dreamy, love-deep sleep,
To meet a foe, whose deadly spear
Slew him 'mid his revels here,—
A foe fair Thebes could not withstand,
Who found, and conquered all her land;
Took her wreaths of glory 'way,
To give her this remote decay!
In which the arms that clung to love
Were forced so awfully to prove
That Death was greater even than
The strength of mighty, loving man!
Ah, what a fall of state was here,
To leave no mourner even near!
Desolation, everywhere,
Waiting for the world's last year!

Who sees it, who, from only this,
Can feel one thought of Thebes' past bliss?
Mimes they were, now Death has flown
Away with all except their bone:
A mimic world of life we deem,
Whose acting must have been a dream
Of greater beings living where
The stage is lighted by a star,
Whose vast curtain ne'er rolls down,
Whose fixed scene is one great throne,
Supernal with a golden light,
That dispels all death, and night!
But, where they love and breathe, how vain
To think these bones will e'er explain!
If by thought we could explore
That unending stella shore,
We might see them and not know
They ever lived and died below!—
For in life death's mystery
Is something we can never see,
Something that, if formed, no mind
Could amid the earthly find;
Yet 'tis one thing deep impressed
Within the intellect and breast,
That too appears to move with will
And regulate the world we feel.
The world may grow the mind, but yet
'Tis influenced in turn by that
Which e'er defies material place
To smile triumphant on the face,
As the countenance of soul
Instarred within the lovable!

We feel it in the wooed drooped eye,
In the essence of the sky,
In the voice of silentness
Dreaming 'mid earth's pleasantness,
In the mirroring of streams,
As they see a world of limbs
Dividing for the noonday beams!
In the lifting of the flower
To the kisses of the shower!
We feel it when a life is born
Out of all it is to own!
In the growing of its parts,
For a home for loving hearts;
In the waving of tall willows,
By the tomb beside the billows
Of a sounding, sobbing sea,
'Neath a sunset cold and gray!
We know it in all stilly places,
Where the mind's fine ear hears voices
Speaking like as if they hid
Between the living, and the dead!
Yes, we hear the soul oft singing,—
Feel it through our bodies thrilling;
Cling to it when even dying,
As though its power could heal pain;
Yet, when gone, all wisdom's vain
That would find its dwelling in
The loveless bones of buried men!

Standing on the lonely moon—
A rounded step up to the throne

Of some heaven-blossomed June—
Appears the spirit of the past,
Turning back to sadly cast
One glance upon the wreck we see
Before it enters mystery;
Its dress is air, its head a gleam
From the furthest world's soft beam.
And the silver velvet light
It leaves upon the ebon night,
Looks the essence of its eyes,
And feels the breath of parting sighs!
A shooting orb that bows the dome
Of the moony, requiem gloom,
Blazes mirrored in the stream,—
Typical of life's short dream!
No sound disturbs the arid waste,
No boat lies on the river's breast,
No voice tells aught of all that's gone,—
No laugh, no cry, nor sob, nor moan:
The silence of the spheres here dreams,
Broken only by the gleams
That spread in ghostly sympathy
Down upon the city,—
Broken only by the light
Wherewith to see the desolate night!
Dead! upon earth's bosom still,
Whose breath in vapors seems to steal
The ghosts of those who moan and sigh,
Journeying into the sky!

Where the sacred symbols hide
Within the marble pyramid,

The darting lizard can be seen
Feeding little creatures green.
Behold, within the yawning fane,
Level with the desert's plane,
The costly shrine, the jeweled throne,
Below a ponderous temple's stone!
The altar and the sceptre lie
Crushed beneath Death's mystery!
And all is hushed, and still, and dread,
With the presence of the dead!
The solitude!—illimitable—
Like a sea of marble,
Waveless and immovable!
On which the moonlight stays to rest,
Like manes on the tombstone's breast!
In the vaults, where mummies lie,
Even worms for food do die!
Thebes has entered that dim valley
Where the grave is all, and only;
Mammoth even in her bones,
Which lie her agéd, chiseled stones!
Not like most who death reposes,
Has she gifts of funeral roses.

Oh, mighty Thebes, there's one who stands
With flower garlands in her hands
Before thy massive tomb's high door,
Who will mourn thee evermore,—
Fame, who bids her pomp and state
Stand outside thy vault's barred gate,
And there her queenly presence wait,

While, amid thy utter silence,
She does thee lowly reverence!
Kneeling down, she wipes a tear,
And on thy mighty, lonely bier,
With a speechless monody,
Lays her flowers tenderly,—
Tributes to thy memory!

Like a ghost within a cave,
Thebes lies buried in her grave;
The reeds upon the river-bank
Are bent, and stagnant, dark, and dank;
The desert seems to keep it all—
Sacred to some awful thrall,
And sobbing flow the waters by
Through the wastes of land and sky!
Dumb-like is the very sound
Of our footstep on the ground;
A world of monstrous dreariness,
Stilly as the emptiness
Which, as space, the stars divide!
Silent as an entombéd bride,
Whose beauty lies upon great Death,
Blackened with his savage breath!
Lonely, lonely, melancholy fate,—
But such is the end of man's estate!

The royal head in mummy case
Mocks its past—a Paradise!
No more it rolls its eyes, with will
To love, to pardon, or to kill;

The crown sits on an empty thing,—
The skull of Egypt's greatest king!
And in each bony, hollow hole
The jewels fall—the eyes of soul.
'Twas only wealth he saw,—behold!
'Tis wealth alone which sees the world!
The sceptre rests within his hand,
And yet no monarch's stern command!
He waits on Death to give the sign
That shall make him now divine!

The soft red lips of Egypt's queen
Mock, too, the time that they were seen
To move with love, for cruel Death
Holds her melrose, fleeting breath;
Wrapped within her wraps of cloth,
She sleeps with dust and preying moth,—
A mummy to the day when she
Moved men's souls with ecstasy!
Around her waist a zone of gold,
Around her heart a zone of cold!
Decked with coins and silver rings,
As in the day she conquered kings!

Oh, woman fair, could not thy face
Stayed Great Death in his sure race?
Why not have played the siren then,
When *he* came wooing, as oft with men
Thou woos to cast a love away,
When tired of its long constancy?

Once, when Thebes was bright with splendor,
A priest walked 'long the porch of Luxor,—

Out upon the terrace high,
And looked him long into the sky,—
He strove to read her destiny!—
The time when mighty Thebes should die!
Just as we,—so he pondered,
So he marveled, so he wondered,
Then, as we, sank down to dream it
All belonged to some far spirit
Of the stars, caressing him
Through the evening's mystic hymn!
He saw the spangled dancers come
To the river's bluish gloom,—
Saw the lights, the gold, the faces
Of the throng, and met their glances;
Looked him down the river wide,
Kneeling by a pillar's side;
Breathed the air—thrilled with feeling,
Winged through spirit-realms from dreaming
Some strange, deep philosophy,
Which was all a fallacy!
Knew the world, and kissed its breath,—
Yet now he's mummied here in death;
Like as we,—no difference here,—
In that he felt the world was fair!

Once a lover gayly clad
Into his boat leapt light and glad;
Gazed an instant on a star,
Thinking love shone sweetly there!
His heart it lived from memories
Of his lady's beauties,—

Counted every moment till
Her wooed, loved arms he'd ravish feel,—
Wild with love and love's bright flame,
Yet here a mummy devoid of name!

Once upon a stone above
The river decked with boats of love,
Sat a woman, deeply dreaming,—
Deeply sobbing from her thinking
Of her husband dead upon
A battle-field beneath the moon!
And the soft and tender spheres
Lighted up her heart-wrung tears,
As if to show they pitied love,
While holding half of it above!
Just as we, she grieved and hid
Her sorrow with the speechless dead;
Yet to-day, in some dark fane,
Lies she buried on this plain!

Oh, Winter Death, thy snows are cold
To the body's charming world!
How icy they fall on the mouth,
And on the lilies heaped and smooth,
Just below the blush of maid,
In life's ravishness arrayed!
How white the cheek becomes when thou
Dost drop the grave's chill, stilly dew!
How cold and awful lies the summer,
Filled with lovesome seeds in flower

Of a life, whose move seemed all
The world in one sufficient soul!
Oh, Death, what soliloquy
Of man can solve thy mystery?
Brother to the goddess Spring,
Ever lurking, slumbering
In the bud for buds again,
Who dries and makes the summer-rain,
So that Spring may laugh her tears
O'er the flowers' drooping cares,
For the beauty of the lawn,
And the pleasure of the sun!
We trace thee in the laws which grow
All we feel us here below,
And yet through all, in some deep place
Hidden from thy wanton race,
Is that whose freedom from decay
Defies the dark of thy damp way,
When once thy finger touches near
Its home of beauty given here;
From thy grasp 'twill ever be
Promised to eternity!
With its secret told above
To some Presence, whose vast love
Must dispense with thy black hand
When soul asserts its high command!
Here, although thy duty's plain
To kill for newer blooms again,
We ever ask the brighter dream,
Both here, and through all end of time!
Oh, Minister of Darkness, slave
Of earth, and God's ordained grave!

Where in all thy gloom is hid
The soul within the dusty dead?

In youth, a long way off we see
The phantom of Death's certainty;
When age creeps o'er us, nearer comes
The spectre of the land of tombs;—
Draws so close we feel the night
That gives him his unearthly sight
To see us shudder as his size
Grows monstrous on our starting eyes!
'Tis then his shadow fills our brain
And gives to man his dying pain!
Yet Death was in the soul which came,
Hot as some volcanic flame,
To the eyes of Love, who lay
Voluptuous with beauty!
Death was really in the kiss
Of twin souls at peace with bliss;
In the glance which held each part
That went to make Love's burning heart,
Where the life through souls in eyes
Twined the arms with ecstasies,
Feeling their round warmth to be
The soul of Love's sweet rhapsody;
There, Death thrust his face, for we
Acknowledge him Love's mystery!
The sigh of love, the gasp of breath
Are only moments held by death,
And time, which seems allotted us
For the hours of our bliss,

Is only relative, we know,
And life, the grave, our joy and woe,
The same to some great end below
Which belongs to that vast scheme
In which we now but merely dream!
Fearing to awake and see
The morning of eternity!
Oh, why should life be born with Death
Growing larger with each breath,
Until with utter fear we gaze
Into his overwhelming eyes?
'Tis, indeed, a serious fate
To inherit life's estate,
For, no matter how we live,
At last we must these bodies give
Unto a dark eternal sleep,
For which those left bow down and weep!
The sympathy we hold for those
Gone into their last repose
Is often ours, because we know
Our days are numbered here below.
The grave which catches sorrow's tears
As often holds the mind's sharp fears!
The dead remind us that we must
In time dissolve to senseless dust;
And yet on death all life depends
For its after, better ends!
Then let us strive to think it best,
And through its sleep we find the rest
Of greater joys forever ours,
Whose days are dialed by sweet flowers,

Whose eons never count as time,
But as one immortal dream!

But now, within this ruined place,
Humanity appears in space,
Instarred in tears, without its bliss,
As though all things were womanless!
'Tis so the heavens keep the dead
And all their pomp of life decayed!
Only ghosts of those who sang
Until the very heavens rang,
In the earth-shine gloomy light
Appear enjoying some delight,
But in such groanful, awful ways,
That we who picture ancient days,
Shudder from our fantasies.
The king is on his marble throne,—
A weather-beaten, blackened stone,
Which assumes by chance an urn
Profiled 'gainst the twilight sky
And washed by sands that, drifting, sigh!
The very tramp of victory,
Coming from the sounding sea,
Echoes as the insects' noise,
And chilly chirp of vampire cries!
The clink of many glasses sound
In the eddies whirling 'round
'Neath the sad and nighted moon
Dreaming of the feasts now gone,
And the royal wedding-day,
Celebrates its nuptial joy

In the palm-trees, two by two,
Rising up upon the view;
While the love-blest virgin seems
In the pall of spectral dreams,
Which float around the saffron moon,
Couched upon a bed of moan!
Again our fancy seems to frame
The skeleton of some fair dame
Bathing in the wide blue stream,
Laughing at the little waves
Processioning in rings of graves!
Not even though this awful spectre
Makes a movement in the picture!
Nothing but a pile of stones,
Where we fancy maiden's bones,
Tumbled to the waters wide,
Where once the swelling of the tide
Warmed it 'gainst her venus side!

Deep in the realms of unknown things,
Where the elements bubble springs,
The glories of the past move 'long,
Chanting some unknown song!
Upon the highway of vast space
A cavalcade of ghosts now race,
And seek the isle of mystery
Blooming on the plain of sky,—
An oasis in the sands
Of unseen angelic lands!
There, 'mid shade,—a shadowed dove,—
The grave enfolded by God's love,—

Shall sit the kings with all their wealth,
To look them down upon the earth.
No Western lights are thrown there,
Across the verdure, and the air;
No clanking of the iron key
In the tomb disturbs the joy.
We may believe, we must confess
To this, but where this happiness
Lies within the land of being
No mortal knows except by dying!
But oh, the springs—the springs that flow
Out from God to overflow
As the universe we see,
Held in His hand eternally!
What years of deaths perpetual,
What epochs of the budding soul
Of worlds, thrilled with blossoming,
For vast loves that, dreaming,
After while must wake to gaze
Upon their gorgeous mysteries!
What possibilities there lie
In the cosmos of the sky!
Where the earth, a drop of water,
Mingles with a brooklet's laughter
In a heaven,—where the orbs,
With their life and verdure robes,
Stand as atoms for such Being
As confounds all sense of knowing,
Even in our fancy,—yet
What a home for spirit!
Where the stars, as aces, form
A world like this, green and warm,

For titanic shapes; so great
That all the earth—its ground and light—
Would only make an atom to
A form, that it might move and grow
In this giant-land to know
The universe as a whole,—
A world of matter,—where the soul,
Breathing only of the air,
Would live on millions—millions there,
Of gigantic suns alone,—
Infinity to *this* is one!
And when considering unity,
And evolution's mystery,
Cannot our reason faintly see
That, as the animalcule thrives
Below the man, for human lives,
Man could easily take its place
By analogy to space,—
Where Being has no end of all,
Which, progressing, bears the soul!
May not this world an atom be
To one we call eternity?
An atom, just as atoms here
Compose all parts of its fair sphere?—
Life and matter, in its forms,—
The very blood of some great arms
That must feel a love, when all
The stars, as aces, make the whole
Of a world, so vast that God
Walks from living as its blood!
If this be so, why, then, through time,
We, its part, must know its dream!

We see the atom changing here:
May not the earth, from year to year,
Through its progress, change the days
Of *that* world's felicities?
Cannot we say the mind progressing
Means that men are ever growing
To a state completed here—
For a change still nearer there?
Love, in man, embodies all
The attributes of God's true soul;
It signifies a growing 'bove
Other souls, to live and love.
This creative power, then,
Given, through the sex, to men,
Shares it with a greater might—
God through love—for love's delight!
Then we see the moral state
Helps the earth to grow complete;
Religion means this unity
Of man with one vast Deity!
Material states, then, ever must,
When done with here, and ended—dust:
Go to act in higher spheres,
Through more perfect atoms—stars—
Till the soul shall come to know
That world where all does ever grow,
In the light of God's existence,
And know His own intelligence.
If a Being there thought, then,
With the atoms, as us men,
Could not it feel from really being
Part of all we now are living,—

Every thought that mortals have
From their birth until the grave?
How often we these unseen forms
Feel within our yearning arms,
As the sunsets count them past
Towards the sadness of the last!
'Twould seem that death was, after all,
The better season of the soul;
And that through it the spirits gave
A gentle sigh, because the grave
Must needs be for us to bear
Before we move with them afar!
Through that world whose very sand
Is like to one sweet flowered land!
Where a kiss would thrill the whole
Universal lovely soul!
Thrill through a thousand stars of light
As the heart for life's delight!
Where God becomes the rain which feeds
The springs with life empyrean seeds,—
The rain, His eyes; the land, his might;
The soul of All His actual light!
Where all the objects which we know,
Bury in a seed to grow
A world to hold our mortal breath,
And all our feelings 'bout its death:
All the feelings of the end
Life lives so long to apprehend!
Just as in a flower's seed
Is held its death, and emerald blade,
So, within a starry germ
Is its beauties, and the worm!

And this seed! may not it be
An atom in the majesty
Of some being feeling grow,—
A love which we will some day know,
When the budding of the stars
Shall fulfill the soul's grand prayers!—
From their flowing as our blood,
Giving consciousness of God?—
He who looks upon a sphere
As we upon a seed-pod here;
Yet, knowing why it has its birth,
While we know only laws of earth.
Oh, to look in God's real eyes,
Out there in the *endless* skies!
And read the meaning of the soul
That blooms its entity from All,—
That dies to leave its body's bloom
In the dankish, darkened tomb!
We reel in thought, we madly rave,
And seek with tears the lonely grave,
There to gaze upon the spheres
As once we gazed without our tears;
Yet often *then*, our loves, and death,
Seem throbbing with the same strange breath,—
Seem lifted up upon the wings
Of tender love, mid beauty's things,—
Lifted far above the grave,
Until the sea of Time's strong wave
Draws us near the stars' dim shore,—
Then we struggled blindly for
The days when, by the ivied tomb,
Love seemed sweetened in its gloom!

Out from the realms of vital aces
Came the forms we know in faces;
Earthly being seems to be
A stopping in eternity,
Of an essence journeying on
To be everlasting born!
But the erebus between
Omnipotence, and little men,
Yawns before each lover's path,
And echoes every thoughtless laugh.
Would that by some poppy-field
We our breath might painless yield,—
Sweet 'twould be to lay us there
In the opiate soft air,
And in a dreamy Western glow
Shut our sleepy eyes and go!
But joy of the fitted hour
For youth's dear love and chance of power,
Allows old snowy Time to come,
And tempts us all into the tomb
With sweet flowers, and the hope
Of many more before we stop,
Weary from their colors gay,
Aged, and fitted but to die!—
With our elegiac eyes
Fixed upon the silent skies,
Asking how the worlds were born,
And where we'll know the now unknown?—
Whom we sympathetic feel
In every zephyr of the real!
Did God outline the beautiful
With the breathing of His soul,

So the aces might drift in
The lines for worlds, and shapes of men?
If this be so, how many years
Will it take the soul through spheres
To wing it through God's very breath,
Free from laws of growth and death?
Alas! to die and know so little
Of the spirit and its castle!

Like spangled stars that glimmer on
The waters when the night is born,
Appear the souls of men to gleam
In the world a restless stream;
Human birth is like a dream,
Unfolding with the buds to feel
The beauty of the flowers steal
Into an essence which defies
A knowledge of its destinies!
Yet life, as if it slept upon
The border-land of some vast sun,
Effulgent with empyrean light,
Dreams itself a spirit,
Which through beauty touches love,
That in a Paradise above
Will bestow what now is dear,
But more perfect, purer, fair!
Our life, dependent on the earth,
Only feels its spirit-birth,
To beseech the ghostly face
Of silence and sad loneliness,
To throw aside its veil and show
The *beauty of the eyes which know*

The awful meaning of our death
Breaking through the world to breath!
Alas! that souls should seek the sad
And mouldy places of the dead,
When asking of the stars a kiss
Upon life's faith in after-bliss!

Oh, draw aside Thy veil of spheres,
Pass by the endlessness of years;
Although Thy works do show Thee grand,—
Every form of sky and land,—
We crave the blessed sight of Thee,
God of All, in all we see!—
We ever long to see Thy face,
Believing in Thy Paradise!
Thy beauties spread to cover Thee;
Our hearts acknowledge fervently
Their lovely blooms, and ever feel
That Thou art hidden 'neath the real,
In every flower-leaf unfolding,—
As though a mite of Thee was dreaming,
So perfect is it looped with fine-
Tinted petals, most divine!—
In every tree, in all the mountains,
In the play of forest fountains,
In the insect's perfect being,—
Little lives little seeing!
In the orbs above our own
Like to this, and those unknown,
Like to this, our reason says:
Infinite like drops of haze!

But, above all, in the eyes
Of a love which feels earth's things,
To give them joy's soaring wings
To fly, if Thou wouldst let us come,
Into the gardens of Thy home,
Bringing there the loveliness
Of a love's great happiness!—
That peace which silently enfolds
A woman with her eyes' sweet worlds,
Which reflect the lovely whole
And tells us of Thee through the soul!
Yet, for all our summered sphere,
'Gainst all we feel so lovely here,
We yearn for Thee in every prayer!
We see that life was born to die,
And Thou wilt never tell us why!
To live is dear, to love,—is grand,
To rule as men, as men command;—
These blessings, so supreme to us,
Art nothing to Thy mightiness;
In *this* is Time made captive for
The noonday of Thy unseen shore,
Where all creation, we believe,
Basks in the smiles that Thou dost give!
But where, in that most awful space
Of never-ending endlessness,
Is this Thy world, the orb of All,
The dwelling of Thy kingly soul?—
Where life is life but in Thy sense,
And Death lies in an endless trance!—
Where Thou must be, like our gold sun,—
A light from which all things are born,

Around which worlds most stately move
For existence, and a love
That exceeds all we can feel,—
A love which, loving, bears the real,
Which means creation, light, and soul,—
A love that *is* Thee—Thee in All!
Which can rise above its own
Material shape to reign alone!—
Where nothing was ever known,
And feel itself supreme in might,—
This is Thee—Thy Spirit!—
Which is shadowed forth as birth
Upon the small, dependent earth,—
Birth which is Thy love half told
Unto a life fixed on this world!

Deep down amid a wild abyss—
A place of utter dismalness,
An ebon realm of nothingness—
Went Thebes, with all her loveliness,
Until, upon the lonely sea
Of immortal mystery,
All were brought them face to face
With the eyes that see all space!
Oh, to look in *these* and live!
What would we willingly not give?
To look where ends do never end,
Where endless things forever blend
With extremes of Being's might,
Lighted by immortal light!—
How should we seem to what we seem,
Even in youth's wedding-dream?

Ah! foolish all conjecturing—
The merest dream of dreaming!
For, outstretched, these ruins say—
Say it, oh, so melancholy!—
That man, as man, is earthly!

Here within this sand-clogged cleft
[Where a little art is left],
Leading to some buried shrine,
The emerald newts, as they dine
Off a spider's furry head,
Tell us all about the dead
We may e'er expect to know,
Until that gold, angelic glow
Shall shine athwart our risen eyes
The morning of God's Paradise!
Here the dead must seek the dead,
And that light, cold and red,
Which lies along the flat, far West,—
Typical of life's last rest!
Here we see and feel the sun
Has sunk it deeper, farther down
Than we, amid the grave-stones, home,
E'er believed about the tomb.
The stars alone appear to tell
Something of the deathly spell,
Which robs the greatest of their breath;
For only *they* give light to death,
Piercing through that endless night
With a pendulous, dim light;
The past and present—yes, the All
Rises up to meet that soul,

Which seems to move the spheres as eyes
Instinct with sense of destinies!
For in the calm and stilly dream
Of the starlights' lethean beam,—
In the scene so melancholy,
Appears the ghost of Deity!—
Doomed of self to speak alone
Through a starbeam, and a bone,
Of the way we e'er must see
Beyond this world, His glory!

Oh, that one poor traveller
Would return from some dim star
To tell us God was risen there!
Where are the kings—the feeling life,
That took the dancing maiden wife?
Where are the cheers of soldier-men?
Ah, hollow are the walls within,—
The few which stand like blighted things,—
Statues to their long dead kings!
All the beauty,—every soul,
Seems to wander like the ghoul,—
As shadows, cling around the feet
Of grotesque figures in their seat,
Who sit, and gaze with stolid face
On the desert's lonely space,
As if to find the souls of those
Who sat them here in dumb repose!
Giants, like the men now gone,
Giants, to their labors done,—
Their gods, who left them, to remain
Upon the earth to show how vain

Was life's belief in unseen things,
And worldly gifts to crown men kings!
Around the broken fountains lie,
The songs of men's most regal day,—
In drifting piles of gleaming sand,
Which runs it through the traveller's hand
Like to burning tears for those
Who, sleeping here in death's repose,
Have slept three thousand years away
'Neath the blaze of tropic sky!
The images they made express
Their traits of sin, and nobleness,—
Their love of beauty's flowered form,
Crumble 'way each speaking charm,
And, like to souls who fashioned them,
Have lost the race they ran with Time!
And in their eyes, as if to prove
The fleeting life of human love,
There is a blank and loveless gaze
Unknown to life's sympathies.

Airs from off the mournful juncous
Hang o'er the dreary scene infectious
With the presence of the dead,—
Heavy, like half-molten lead,
And the oozy, dampish bats,
Seek the million dancing gnats;
The solid cactus shades the asp,
While the vapors 'round the cusp
Of the lonely-going moon
Seem to drip, and groan, and moan,

As they meet the stagnant airs
That seek to hide the blazing stars!
And the dust the traveller meets
Appears to rise like cloudy sheets,
Which follow him into the tombs,
And lose them in the deeper glooms.

There a mummy, lately found,
Stretches on the moonlit ground,
Gazing with its shrunken eyes
Upon the heavy tropic skies.
How the rings within its ears,—
Sweet vanity in hemispheres,
Of jewelled, rusty, eaten gold,
Resting on thin cheeks of mould,
Tell the painful, tender story
Of the end of life and beauty!
We like to dwell upon its past,
Canous to the very last!
We'd like to know thy pretty name,
Maiden from a land of fame!
Asking—yes, thy Egypt name,
But wishing more to know what thou
With all thy laughter, did below
Among the realms of ghosty Death,
With thy heart and with thy breath?
Was it thou who heard the drum,
Saw the conquering army come,
Danced before the mighty king,
Heard the luter's pleading song
Out upon the waters smooth,
In the arms of some strong youth?

Or wast thou on the terraced-porch,
Helping light a bright love-torch,—
Helping with thy willing hands
To show the heart's fair gladful lands?
Where e'er thou wast, what e'er thou did,
It matters not, for all art dead!
Not a single, mortal soul
Of all who saw thee beautiful
Lives to-day upon the earth,
Nor ever will with mortal breath!
And it is very strange to see
A remnant, even, maid, of thee;
For ages—ages have passed by
Since thou upraised thy dark-lashed eye!

We seem to see a wondrous land,—
A realm of fountains visioned grand:
Mighty swans, who stretch their necks,
Throwing waters up, till specks
Of little drops seem float the spheres,—
A firmament of art in tears!
Upon each lustrous bird there sits
Nymphets, who caress the jets,
Breaking up the streams of tears
That would shine the mournful stars.
These images of bird and maid,
Golden stretch through umber shade,
Until the last, in tiny forms,
Mingle with far lethean storms
Of all that made reality,
When lo! worlds through mystery

Move with objects loved on earth,
Awaiting dead—a spirit's birth!
We seem to see a virgin's tress
Hang o'er a star in loneliness.
On another world there blooms
A ghostly lotus in the glooms
Of a sky cold, and drear,
With a winter's frozen year!
On a star towards the South
Is a woman's bloodless mouth;
Now a dove of white, that sways
On a branch in purple breeze,
While Western voices, dying, moan
The notes it sings unto the moon!
Dim upon a planet waning
Are the eyes of one dead—dreaming!
While the lashes sleeping sweep
The mystery, which seems to weep!
All that sweetens life we seem
To see among the stars,—a dream
Of death, and a deathful mist,—
Which hovers up from earth's drear breast.
The fountains and the nymphets were
All life and art, while every star
Received at last in mystic realms
The objects of our first dear dreams.

Thebes we think of as our own
Life beneath the love-white moon,
And seek to follow in the orbs
The moving of her Venus robes;

But, alas! the world's alone
Bereft of ideal death, and noon
Of ideal life, spread clear
With only night and God's idea!
Like lovelights dimmed in spacious tombs,
They burn them in His mighty rooms;—
On the altar of His might
They burn their holy, fairy light,
Calling on the heart to rise
And meet with prayer their souléd gold eyes!
Beneath their dome each soul attends
The service of life's solemn ends!
Where the stars at twilight gleam,—
Carol their soft, tender hymn,
The worshippers with love and joy
Find in them sweet sympathy;
When the soul has lived its dream,
And leans upon the arm of Time,
Kneeling 'neath the skies, it sees,
Dimly, mighty destinies,
While the love of all the past
Is upon earth's bosom cast;
Then, 'mid the music of the All,
The pilgrim gives to God his soul!
The world is church and grave-yard, too,
And its dome of starry blue
Covers o'er high Nature's nave,
Where, in some corner, is the grave!
All are pilgrims,—all pass by
The altar of the sacred sky;
Some sing hymns of wonder long,
Some depart with childhood's song!—

All kneel down to say their prayers,
And die beneath the eterne spheres,
Silent as to where men go
When carried down to dust below;
Looking pale and strange to those
Whose fate it is the doors to close,
That shut the warm light of the sun
From the eyes whose life is done!—
Who, sleeping, oh, so far away,
They do not hear the clanking key!

The presence of the time gone by
Weighs upon us like the sea
Moans and tumbles to the sky,
And visions of the past are sad
And dreamy with the silent dead!
Oh, what is death, when we so start
Away from that which once was part
Of human love as felt by us?
What is death's dark, dumb repose
To life, that, like a budding rose,
Opens in the spring of all
Its fascinating, wondrous soul?
Oh, frightful change! how monstrous great,
When we will shun the very light
That lays it still upon the head,
If the eyes are closed and dead!
The soul is thought of in its joy,
But just as often does it sigh
Among the willows 'bout the tomb,
And in the silent, empty room!

The lovely form we really fear,
Behind the grief-distracted tear;
From being once our every joy,
As dead and fitted for decay,
All care is lost to see its face
When once within the grave's dark place!
The lips we loved—like buds of red—
Cause shudders when we touch them dead!
They do not seem to be the same,
And mock the semblance of a dream
That love might give expecting bliss
From their meeting in a kiss!

'Mid these ruins death is vast;
And the gorgeous human past,
Moving by in fancy's world,
Loses all its brilliant gold,
To assume a filmy line
Of spectres marching silent by
Into the solemn, lonely sky.
We marvel when we think of where
All have gone, so kingly fair;
We tremble when the ghosts of them
Vision us Death's gloomy dream!

The stars upon the river rest
As once they rested on its breast,
But with seems a dimmer gleam—
A love-caress, now all a dream!
No maiden breaks the ripple rills
Running into limpid swells,

And the world appears to miss
The absence of her playfulness!
For enthroned above, in moan,
Pales the Venus-mother moon,
Surrounded by a vaporous ring
Of dews that rise from everything,
That drip from off the gray-face stones,
That trickle in upon the bones
Of hiding, bundled skeletons!
In the West a phantom line
Draws it like an ivy-vine,—
Like a gateway to the dead,
With inscription dunly red,
Speaking in no word of saint,
Expressing, though, a covenant
Made with God for after-days,
And after awful destinies!
The sky turns gray, then to ink;
We cannot see, we cannot think;
Only shudder in the night,
Crying to the skies for light,—
Crying out with yearning tears
To drop us 'neath the spectral spheres,
Whirling loomed, and circled 'round
This little globe of mortal ground!
The feelings of a love rejected
Know the heavens so reflected!—
When upon its weary way
It clings to Hope for future joy,
Yet believing Hope is dead,
With her bowed and lovely head

In the sweets of all the past,
Dark, and lone, and overcast!
Death to love and death to life
Seem the one same piercing strife
Of the yearning, clinging heart,
Divided by an iron dart!
For death of life is parting here
From a worshipped form e'er fair;
Death of love has all the dreaming
Of the possible for dying,—
The possible so golden sweet
With all we hope our souls will meet!
With one death we wander through
A living world all dark with dew,
Sad and mournful, almost helly
With nocturnal, dying beauty!
In the other death we go,
From the beautiful and true,
To stroll us by a river's side,
Feeling no dependent bride!—
We face the vastness of this night
With our little learning's light;
This goes out, and then we stray
Along a shadow-hidden way!
But, oh, believe that One comes then
To lift the tombstones off from men!—
Comes with such an infinite speed
That we pass by this scene of dead,
Which now in life we contemplate
With feelings, like it, desolate!
Feelings that appear to twine
The very earthy, prickly vine,

That, in seeming consciousness,
Buries in the mouldiness;—
Feelings that confuse the sky
With the dust of life's decay;
That soar upwards to a throne,
Then tumble into seas of groan,
There to drift them out again,
And live in wonder from a rain
Falling in the spirit beams
Of the starlight's hovering dreams.—
In these our souls, with eagerness,
Soar so high through spaciousness,
That now our bodies fade away
Into vast inanity!
We have to touch to know we feel,
And here we touch indeed the real!

In moments of quiet twilights lone,
We think we hold within our own
The warm and thrilling hand of God!
We press it to our very blood,
And wander o'er the world with Him,—
O'er emerald valleys, fumy, dim,—
Up the steps of Western cloud,
Where the day-tired spirits brood
In glary robes,—'neath purple eaves
Of vapors dark as wood-hid graves,—
So lifted 'bove the things of living
Become we from our secret dreaming!—
On, until our flight of steps
Brings us to the stars' soft lips!

Up beyond for greater love,
Until so high the world above,
That when we'd press God's hand again,
We stop, and turn, almost insane;
For, behold, we've lost His hand
While rushing to an unknown land!
We seek us long, look 'round each sphere
For a sense of His dear care;
Then returning down the stairs
Of the sunset merged in stars,
Find at last within the gloom,
A little human earthly home,
Where, enthroned on virtues sweet,
Keeping time to life's real feet,
We clasp the hand of Him once more,
To feel it warmer, and more sure!

If in life a man had risen
High above the world, and men;
When this city lived its glory,
Men would then have looked like tiny
Ants, processioning in squares.
If, now, higher up in airs
He'd have flown, the earth as small
As a toy tiny ball
Would have seemed it to the flyer;
And if moving still e'en higher,
Soon its shape he'd lost in space!
Yet no spirit of its face
Would have taken it a place
In the vastness all surrounding,—
Only silence deep, and lasting,

Would have felt this voyager.
So it is with thought of dreamer,
Soaring ever, ever higher,
For the evidence of soul
In the universal all!
Nothing can we know concerning
Of the end of men by dreaming!
If this man of wings, who flew
Out beyond the world's dim view,
Had returned him o'er the way
He ascended in the sky,
He'd have seen the earth returning.
So it is with us believing
In the fancies of the past,—
To the earth we come at last!
Seeing only that the spirit
Loves to live in human light!
Death will leave us ever lonely
In the skies, about the glory
Of the world we live to know.
All our journeyings end just so,
When into the realms above
We conceive that there is love
Such as fills the breast with awe,—
Of a person in all law!
Like a skull in flowers hiding
Is the life we now are living;
For when Death, as cruel winter,
Kills each tender, colored flower,—
There the empty casket lies,
Robbed of all its jeweled eyes
Gemmed from drinking in the skies!

Prayer and fastings, faith and tears,
Never saw beyond the spheres!
Bound to life is what it knows,—
And this can never *more* disclose!
The skeleton has lovely cloths,—
Let us dress us well while here,
Leaving dreamers in the air!
They'll come down, and then confess
That natural life is happiness!
This is never given man,
Unless abiding by the plan
God has seen it fit to give
Unto all that die or live.
Trembling for a future state
Can never change the will of Fate!
Which appears to say, that All
Matter's life—and life and soul—
Moves through cycles for an end
Material, where then may blend
The actual essence of the One
Who shines the central life vast sun!
Death is mystery deep indeed,
But to know of this, what need?
When our human duty's done,
God will never leave us lone,
But send out His messengers,
As eternal law through stars,
To inform the vacant place
Of our Being, that in space
There awaits for bodies lost
Something better than a ghost,—

Something which may live supreme,
As live the worlds in *that* sun's beam,
To flash and die, like to the ace
That comes and goes in dusky lace
Of a lighty narrow beam,—
Till at last the awful dream
Of what we mean to other spheres
Shall be sung into our ears!
The angel's song of fancy given
Melody in one grand heaven!
States there may be by the way,
But Time, who dies in unity
Of the universal might,
Counts as nothing to *this* light
Ever shining out *one* power
That controls the fleeting hour!

Mid gem-set clouds of morning, youth
Builds him one bright realm of truth,
Whose lovely light, so brightly spread,
Grows to be his loved one's head,
Till at last the sunny skies
Look on the world with her fair eyes!
The soul in them, is one with those
Which humanly look out to close
From blushes touching each lashed lid
With a spiritous sweet red,—
The poetry of the heart is one
With the beauty of the sun!
Soul, and world, is one song ode
Sung by spirits moving God.

No elements of life, or earth,
Move and feel in any birth
Without the blending into *one*,
For existence never done.
Life is like its germ when growing
In the womb; yes, all life living
On this world is like the fœtal
Stages of the intervital.
We know not how we have our birth;
We do not see the changing earth
To know the reasons of its times,
Or the essence of its climes;
Yet earth itself because of us
Becomes a germ of loveliness,—
An embryon of sweetest form,
Poetic in the mother warm
Whom we love as God, and hence
The end must be life's blessedness,
Because a God's fair, sunny eyes
Look out the everlasting skies!
As man is born from laws of all,
So the world is born, its soul
Touches e'en the farthest sphere;
To all worlds its soul is dear;
The poetry of its life is ours,
And its birth is to the stars
Like the birth of men to it,—
'Tis thus we know the spirit:
Not alone in man, but all
Comes to us as one great soul!
Soul devoid of matter, we
Leave out of this philosophy;

Enough, that *all* through one vast plan
Allows to earth her creature, man!
'Tis the poetry of the whole
World to other worlds, that soul
Feels when men, through years of strife,
Aim to know the future life!
Thus, always will void mind conceive
Some state revealed where angels live.
The soul of earth is growing, though,
So men through creeds forever grow
Nearer truth, and creeds must be
Until the perfect soul shall see
The glories of its mystery!
Every age brings nearer Earth
With man upon her, for that birth,
Where this charmful world will stand
The being of an unknown land!
For ghosts are now but grief's weak will
To see the perfect actual!
And angels, posies, sweet, sad way
Of speaking of the after-day!
The soul of man can never die;
No more the earth's; for Deity
Is all that moves or ever sees
The vasty heaven's majesties!
Man will always look to God
Until His might is understood;
Creeds are parts of one great plan,
And never can be *all* to man;
Good or bad, they show that soul
Is the essence of the whole,

And God the poetry of a scheme
That from the first was no mere dream!

The body lone and desolately
Lies, glacious, still, and sombrely
In the grave when living's done
With all that life may call its own,
But the spirit, men foresee,
Rises to the Deity!
And their anxious eyes look far
Beyond the realms of ending star
For a fitted land of light,
Worthy of the soul's delight:
Little thinking on some sphere
May be the heaven of their prayer!
The splendor of twin-colored suns
Seem fitted for the angels' thrones:
So grand must be their days to ours,
So wonderful their summer flowers,
And their loves in beings, who
With their grandeurs feel and grow!
We only know our greatest bliss
From material consciousness;
Why suppose that spirit flies
Away from all its carnal days
When the body falls and dies?
What is all we feel and see
But *material* unity?
How can we reach infinity
But through things whose entity
Means alone eternity?

Where would spirit go but to
That which bore it here below,—
That substance, which appeals to sense
As meaning God's omnipotence?
Space and Time we know eternal,
Worlds on worlds are immortal!
Through them God and Love alone
May solve the mystery of our own!
Spirit mingled with the whole
Forbids annihilated soul!
For nothing dies, unless to rise
Flowered with new entities!
Religion signifies the heart
In unison with every part
Which nourishes the body's form;
Deficiency is death and wrong!
Men who say that God condemns,
Look at nature through such dreams
As make an idol, where a law
Forbids such inconsistent war,
And but preface with such mind
The actions we are sure to find.
Wisdom, like the plant, unfolds,
And perfect men, like perfect worlds,
Move them through the realms of space
Ever towards that consciousness
Which, as God, means care of All,—
Sun and star, life and soul!
If there's evil evermore,
A Maker stands at endless war
With the glories which we see
Exist because of unity!—

And this we call all-powerful:
Would God so act against His soul?
Creeds as creeds perform their good,
But never solved that Presence—God!
And where they give the after-life
A hell for souls' immortal strife,—
Men condemn the laws of One
Who kills a world to made a sun!
They live as dreamers half their days,
Where students see more beauties
Ever blooming for the mind,
To make them noble, strong, and kind.
There's blood upon the hands of those
Who build an idol by the rose,
While who may point them to a stain
Where men of science live to reign!
Nothing supernatural can,
Best help the *best* in growing man!

By these ruins let us ponder
On Life's struggle and its wonder:
Here we see that all men do
Ends in death,—yet God must know
Why the end is alway so?
'Tis not for us to see where He
Puts on the robes of Deity!
In the stars we know His might,
And yet they hide Him from our sight,
But in a way so kind, and grand,
That we e'er love His orbs' vast land!

In graves we lay these bodies low;—
To graves our ripest fancies go!
But while our soul asserts its flight
Into the intervital night,
Oft its wings beat down the air,
To mount and soar from star to star,
Till, what we first perceived as dark,
Glimmers with a mystic spark,
So charmful in its spell-born light.
That Soul wings 'way surrounding night,
When, lo! e'en Death we smile upon,
To see him burning in this sun
Of mind's immortal fancy free,
Flaming 'bout the Deity!
The romancy of grander spheres
Pictures beings, in these airs,—
And in the twilight times of earth
We seem to see our angel-birth,—
Appear to know that hands like ours
Clasp each other where the stars
Come and worship with their light,
Thrilling with Divine delight!
The objects of this Unseen place,
Whose beauty lives through time and space,
Exists a world of ideal forms
Such as here display their charms.
Who knows but what a fairy-tale,
Is acted out behind that veil
Spread a curtain far above
As the stars linked bright with love?
And that our visions may not be

Reflections of a romancy,
Whose love is God and true beauty?
May not strange lands now wave their trees,
And oceans sparkling, spread 'neath skies
At this moment in that land
Helping us to understand
Through laws extended to the mite?
As dust goes out in raying light
To rise again into the beam,—
Falling light's perpetual stream,—
So let us soar with wings of might
Ever from the ambient night;—
Ever fight against the gloom
Of the end within a tomb;—
Ever ask, and ever crave
For strength to overcome the grave;
Then, when dying, death we'll face,
Believing earth is but the ace
Of wondrous realms, where flowers twine
Up in lightful climes divine,
Perfumed with the holy soul
Of that One—Immortal!—
Whose eyes have only closed in sleep,
Where our watch we mortal keep!
Let us hope to meet *their* gaze,
Even if the future days
Coming o'er the paths of space
Never light a spirit's face!
'Tis only Death we fear to meet,
Yet Death makes all He's made complete!
Hard for us to think it so,
Gazing on this scene of woe,—

This waste of human labor grand,
This river-brooding, barren land!
Marked by all supremely vast
That once ennobled so the past
With human power; yet, behold,
The end of man on earth foretold!
From the ground he grew, was born,
To it returned when life was done;
And the soul which budded from
His marvelously perfect form
Appears to live in all the spheres,
In all the earthly, changing years;
Seems to travel through the beams
Of the distant orbs' soft dreams;
Dwells at times amid the gloom
Of the painted, gorgeous tomb;
Flies upon the swiftest air,
Lives it always, everywhere;—
In the fancy of the living
Lives it so, 'tis only dreaming!
Here where all is still and lone
Beneath the phantom, crystal moon,
We contemplate that man knows nothing
Of his soul's mysterious going;—
Only knows it leaves behind
Empty skulls without the mind!

Sarcophagused within a sphere,
In which the scene is sepulchre!—
Is all Thebes thought forever hers;
But Death would listen to no prayers,

And Time, who stood awhile, is now
Wiping dry his wrinkled brow!
Dead and silent, lone, and vast,
With all the vain and empty past,—
Thebes, dead Thebes, lying here
In the desert's lonely air!
In the sky of night, and moan,
The essence of the souls long gone,
Appear in brooding troops of cloud
To be marching stately, proud,
Sheeted in long robes, which sweep
The river's misty, dismal sleep;
And the torch of love asmoke,
Drifts a bluish, heavy cloak,
Far along the slumbering Nile,
As if in search of one sweet isle
For the light of its fair soul,—
Rich with Thebes and beautiful!
But that isle will never meet
The misty, frouzy, sluggish feet;
So the vapor-dolorous haze
Rises up through ruined ways,—
Slowly up, to ever blend
With the starlight for the end
In a far, dim vista sweet,
Mighty, vast, and all complete!—
Which afar does touch the past,
And the boundless city's waste,
With a light bright and cold,
Yet flickering, and sorrowful,—
Flickering like brilliant gold,—
'Tis the evening-star of soul!

And here and there a beam of it
Falls a flowered spirit
In the lotus, white and pure,
Clinging to the reedy shore!

Thus will the human end its days,
Leaving 'neath the vaulted skies
Only fragments of the best
To the shades, and woeful West!
And the sands of Life's short day
Fill the hour, when even we
Will no more these ruins prove,—
Life that lived to war and love.
There's nothing now upon the world
Which will not crumble and grow old;
The mightiest works of man are naught,
And from his ancient days we're taught
That nothing on the earth we own
Except the grave's low, lonely stone,
Which ever hides its face away,
As though 't were fearful of the day,
And the ghost of Deity!—
Who, doomed of self to speak in tears,
Ever points us to the spheres,
And all the wonders there, which we
Know in life—eternity!
And so we wait until we're by
This little world on which we die!—
Ever, ever, ever wait
Before the earth—the dead's great gate,

Which men have tried in vain to move
With offerings of faith and love!
Oh, surely God for all they've done
Will show His face to every one,
And give *at last* that mighty care,—
[Which keeps His orbs in circled air.]
A state where they shall ever know
Death no more their surest foe!—
Where such as Thebes was in her might
Would glimmer like a star in night,
Which, on the border-land of space,
Hides from us its tiny face!

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

THE LILIED SEA.

'TWAS in the month of blooming June
  I sought the lilied sea,
Dreaming 'neath the mystic moon,
  Vast, and silvery;
A million lilies, damask white,
  Stretched far beyond the gaze,—
A purling face of creamy light
  To lines of phantom haze.
'Twas a calm and stilly hour
  In which I saw this sight:
Sitting by a lonely tower
  Remote against the night!

"Come up!" a voice cried out to me;
  "Draw near, if thou wouldst know
How far upon this lustrous sea
  The souls of men do go!"

I went, and stood where one did lean—
  A frightful thing of bone—
Out a window high between
  The tower's topmost stone.
This spectre met me with its dead
  And heinous sunken eyes,
Then, in whispers, plainly said,
  Pointing to the skies:

"Thou art looking, mortal, for
  The soul of one called Zulie,—
Believing in the other shore,
  Thou thinkest the water-lily
Bore her safely on its breast
  Across this sea in peace,
And that each flower-wavelet kissed
  Her into Paradise!
Raise thine eyes, look long and well
  For the shore of heaven,—
Perhaps these waters may reveal
  What now to thee is hidden?"
Like rain before the fitful wind,
  In gusts of spray, huge forms
Seemed sweeping through my gloomy mind,—
  A memory, now, of storms!
I looked, and saw; but what I saw
  The half I cannot tell:
Far, far away there lay the shore
  Whose mountains sprang from hell,—
So fast they jetted up vast fire,
  Which filled the mighty of soul
Of all that ever did expire,
  With shapes most terrible!
The awfulness of awful things,
  Deprived of every sense,
Flowed as sulphurous, molten springs,—
  A dead intelligence!
And burnt that principle of all
  Which grows the sex we feel,
Gushing up as Love's fair soul
  To revel in the real!

There was no sex in that vast space
  Where great orbs trembling hid
Away from some unknown face,
  All ruined and decayed,—
Fermenting in the heated air
  A boiling froth, like hosts
Of misshaped, weary, airy, bare,
  Hermogenious ghosts!
Cities filled with priceless wealth,—
  A feast to poet lovers,
Stole away with vaporous stealth
  And roared the scoriac rivers,
Which appeared in myriad flows
  To join some end unseen,—
An end which only could be woes
  When judging by the scene!
The earth, with all, like
  Some fair maid
Lying white, and gold,
  Turned to flame of lurid red,
And, hissing, swiftly rolled
  Around and 'round, then floated low,
Like some great serpent, 'way,
  To lie in that far West, aglow
Of silent dying sky,
  Where the gaspings of the dead
The tomb feels, when to die
  Is not upon a cushioned bed,
But crumbling agony!

Now methought I saw a shade,
  Couched and clasping knees,

Sitting staring at the dead
  With dying, ebon eyes;
Its breast did heave and move alone
  From airs of densest night,
As it sat to watch the sun
  Go down that was called Light!
Until at last it lay in space,—
  An atom of the All,—
Then turned to me its awful face,
  And died the death of soul!

"I leave thee now," the spectre said,
  "Alone look for the rest.
Mortal, thou hast seen the dead
  Set in a chaos West,—
The dead as mighty powers there
  Out in eternity,
Whose morn of worlds will spread somewhere
  Anew with Deity!"

All space looked now aglow,—the light
  Came from forming spheres,
That whirled them out from opaque night
  For untold million years!
Now nothing but the lilied sea
  Stretched silvered out afar
Beneath my own world's spangled sky
  Of star-breathed vision air!
I looked around, the ghost was gone,
  The tower, too, no more,—
And I upon the sands alone
  Still gazed towards that shore:

Soon on the waters I made out—
  Gliding slowly through
The lily-waves—a phantom boat,
  In which stood upright two
Sheeted shapes, by something dead,—
  Something they must bury.
'Twas a lifeless, radiant maid,—
  The still, fair form of Zulie!
One white shape stood by her head,
  The other, in the bow,
Sang the requiem for the dead
  In plaintive music low.
They had no sail, nor even oar;
  I wondered how they moved
So sure towards the lilied shore
  With all I ever loved!

On they came, softly singing
  The lone, lone, funeral lay,—
Which the damask lilies, weeping,
  Whispered to the sea,—
A tired and sobbing minstrelsy
  That quivered every wave,
And made the waters sound to me
  Like harps within a grave!
The brooding vapors lazily
  They left in lines behind,
Flowed away fantastically
  On the listless wind.
Like we who travel, ever toiling,
  The changeful world to roam,
When tired of mortal's fretful living,
  Return to die at home:—

So came these seamen silently
  From out that awful land,
To lay their burden tenderly
  Where I could understand,—
Came through all that sea of lily,
  In the early night,
That I should feel the grave's quiet beauty
  Has its tender light,—
In the sacred silentness
  Which grows for fervent prayer,—
A little spot of holiness
  Flowering with God's care!

I met the boatmen on the shore,
  And we, there by the sea,
By the light of moon and star,
  Put to rest my Zulie
In a tomb half in the waves,
  Which now wash up the lilies
From it,—the holy sea of graves,—
  In which sank all her beauties!
The waters sigh as they touch there
  Because they had to bring her,
Even while their lilies fair
  Never cease to deck her!

ROSES.

I WALKED through a garden of roses,
  Through a garden whose perfume was June,—
  Whose perfume was dulcet with June,
Where the lips of the bud sweetly closes,
  For the touch of the love-lighted moon!

The sky seemed ever to clear it
  O'er that garden of flower and moon,—
  O'er the roses and ravishing moon,
And I feasted on honey my spirit,
  And thought then the year was named June!

'Twas there that the wonderful essence
  Of all which ensweetens earth's day,—
  Of all which enblossoms life's day,
Unfolded the rapturous presence
  Of a maiden I loved fervently!

Her lips were as red as the roses,
  Her eyes dreamed full of the moon,—
  And thrilled my soul with their moon;
As the bud to the dreamy orb closes,
  So closed her curled lips to my own!

The superlative air of that garden
  Was heavy, and soft with her sighs,—
  Was sweet with her languishing sighs,—

Was dear with the breath of the maiden,
  And fair with her luminous eyes!

But now the bright roses are lifeless,
  And all the wide world is a thorn,—
  An Eden transformed to a thorn,
Yet my soul in its sorrow and weakness,
  Still dreams in the heart of the moon!

I walk through a garden of roses,
  But it is not the garden of June,—
  There's nothing resembling June,
For Love's bitter winter exposes,
  The heart of my idol's but stone!

ELLA.

WHERE the shadows dance fantastic
  On the sun's highway,
Speaking in their shapes prophetic
  Of life's little day:
I journeyed with my trusting Ella,—
With my love, whose name was Ella,
  Towards a mighty sea.

Oft I whispered to her, feeling
  That we then might be
[For the shadows grew less fleeting]
  Near the hidden sea;

But she answered, always laughing,—
Lovely, young, and ever laughing,
  That it could not be!

Then the demons in the flowers
  Laughed at her and me,
And from the sky there came in showers
  Rain to make the sea;
Which rolled until my fair-haired Ella,—
My dove-eyed, trusting, pure-souled Ella,
  Sank away from me!

Ever now I wander, dreaming,
  By this cruel sea,
And the tide of life is stealing
  Dear, and close to me,
For, since I lost my lovely Ella,—
Since she died, O, precious Ella!
  I've sought the lonely sea;
And the shadows, which fantastic
  Danced upon our way,
Told us then, in shapes prophetic,
  That life was but a day!

January 20, 1877.

EMBERS.

AROUND the yellow tender corn
  In the land of gloom,
The ivy climbs to tell the morn
  That only in the tomb,

Flowered by the Holy sun,
  Will the harvest bloom!

The embers smoulder on the hearth
  Where sits my Winifred,
Grown to her nuptial's birth,
  So beautiful—but dead!
Dead, out 'neath the drifting snow,
  Yet by me here this night,
As once I saw her draped to go
  With the angels bright!
Many a bud there might have been
  Around her, here the flower,
And many the joy, forever green,
  Had not grim Death so loved her!

The withering limbs of looming yews
  Stretch out a harp's deep strings,
All crusted with the freezing dews,
  Through which the lone wind sings,—
That sorrow has come, but lately come,—
  'Tis hardly known to me:
No more than the sudden coming storm
  Is known to the rippling sea!
The spring has past, the summer stayed
  Within the tender blossom,—
The buds which grew when we were wed
  Lie sered upon her bosom!
The cottage in the snow is hid,
  And on its window-panes
There's little pictures of her head
  'Mid frozen lovely scenes,—

Where laughing children's wondering eyes,
  In dimpled faces fair,
Speak of unborn destinies
  Playing in the air!

Oh, Winifred, fair Winifred,
  Gone! forever gone!
The morning dawns upon her dead!
  All ivied like the corn,
And darkened is the world's new birth,
  For dead the flower here,
Drooping by the smould'ring hearth,—
  Drooping, young, and fair!
And I who sit alone can see
  Dimly in the dark,
The garden of our ecstasy
  In one bright, dying spark,
Which, wafted up to God's great throne,
  Kindles there a peace;
And as I sit me so alone,
  I feel in dreams her kiss!
Oh, Winifred, could that have been
  Really thy caress?
Winifred, my youth's young queen,
  Let me prove the bliss!
Speak to me in this dark room,—
  Whose hand in mine gave this?
Whose presence in this utter gloom
  Dare bring me Cypress?
Ah, silent token of the dead,
  No tongue could tell more sure!

Alas, alas, my Winifred,
  We'll meet on earth no more!
But in some place where Love is light,
  Where Death is buried daily,
My eyes shall see from holy sight
  Again thy girlish beauty!
Oh, wait in heaven thou for me;
  No angel love until
I lay me down and come to thee,
  Sweet Winifred, fair angel!

WAITING.

WHERE the angels wander sadly,
  There the spirit of the lost,
Wanders in a paly valley
  Of the moon-world, like a ghost!

And the spirit's name is Amie;
  Wings she has for heaven's light,
But it seems she cannot leave me
  Here alone in earth's sad night!

So it is she waits her gladly,—
  Gladly waits for me to come,—
Wanders in that moon-lone valley,
  Shining pale above my home!

Spirits seldom so long tarry
  Near this world when glorified,
But the love of faithful Amie,
  Never to the world has died!

KATHARINE.

THOU art a statue, Katharine fair,
  Carved from out a stone,—
As hard as is the marble rare,
  I kneel before thy throne!
In thine eyes a cold light comes
  Whenever they meet mine;
Our spirits seem to seek their tombs,
  There to intertwine!
For in thine orbs of lazulite,
  Down in their soulless gleam,
I see thee lying in a night
  Barren of one dream!—
Dead to all those destinies
  Which signify thy face,
Dimpled with such rhapsodies
  As I could give for peace!
If thou dost think that love is naught,
  And worldly things the best,
Remember at the last I sought
  To fold thee to my breast!
For love wilt touch thee *once* on earth,
  Thou art but human here,
And then thou'll know its priceless worth,
  And know that thou art fair!
'Tis not for admiration's sighs,
  Nor merely pride and show,
That heaven gave thee thy blue eyes;
  I tell thee no—oh, no!

'Twas to see life's truest ends,—
  To know the meaning of
Every beauty as it blends
  With one supernal love!
We may not know life's meaning well,
  But this our hearts must feel,—
That if they ever ask to dwell
  Within the truthful real,
That then Love holds his tender arms,
  Asking for the all,
And heaven, knowing of our dreams,
  Fills them with life full!

Thou art a statue, Katharine fair,
  A statue, nothing more,
Which never shed a passion-tear,
  And yet stands always pure;
And some day for this purity
  A little ray wilt beam
From out the realms of Deity,
  To give thy soul its dream!
It is because I feel this now
  Passing into me,
That I so hope the ray wilt grow
  Until it reach to thee!
Amid the world's great loveliness
  We then would breathe our breath,—
Bond to all through happiness,
  Which, ending in our death,
Would grow again and to us show
  How priceless to the earth,

A love whose meaning we would know
  Was sacred from its birth,—
Sacred to that unity
  Of all which, living here,
Finds at last in Deity
  The harvest of each sphere!

December 10, 1876.

THE OLD MILL.

'TWAS by the old mill, resting, ruined, where the moss
  grows and the vine,
That I, one evening late in summer, called a rare sweet
  maiden mine.
We—fair Gertrude and myself—stood just above the
  idle stream,
That, since the water-wheel was broken, laughed along
  in peace its dream,
The shady, dark, old elms grew dense and cool above
  us there,
While the golden light of sunset quietly touched sweet
  Gertrude's hair,—
Stole its way through countless branches, as that day
  of life—the last—
Steals it through the shady places, where we sit when
  youth is past.
But of death we did not think then, yet we seemed to
  feel the sky
Made our lives more holy, sweeter, in that like it we
  might die!

I did not seem to woo my Gertrude, never spoke one single word,
'Twas the song of stream and sunset, 'twas the lay of breeze and bird,
That told us then our souls were one with all we felt upon the earth,—
Told us that our lives were one with everything we'd felt from birth!
While alone, I'd thought on often just the words that I should say
When beside my fair-haired Gertrude, but forgot them on this day,—
The day we stopped, as if by chance, near the old moss-covered ruined mill,—
Stopped upon our separate life-paths as they entered Love's bright dell.
She stood by me, blushing, wondering, feeling love shone in my eyes,
While I touched her soft and gently, pointing to the golden skies;
There we saw our mutual spirits, happy in the setting day,
Waiting with a love eternal, stronger from its mystery,
Which did seem for us to solve it, as I took her little hand,
Feeling that if days were numbered, Time for us would stay the sand.
Thus it was I wooed my Gertrude in the silence of the day,
By the old mill on the streamlet won her heart thus silently!

February 17, 1877.

GOMA.

HEAVY hang the crimson roses
  On the dew-damp mound,
As the sunlight, cold and silent,
  Leaves the desolate ground.
Withered are the perfumed roses,
  Tied with golden tress
To the head of one called Goma,
  Lying 'neath the grass.
Oh, shadows of all living beauties,
  Why seek out her bed,
To be the dreams I dream of her—
  Whose dreams are of the dead?
If I could only know thee now,
  But life stands in the way;
Fie, I'll kill it!—Love is better
  Than breath without love's day!
Listen! 'tis the voice of Goma,
  [Yes, the wound is deep!]
Listen! 'tis the soul of Goma
  Singing in its sleep!
Swift rolls the earth the sky through,
  T'wards an endless might,
Sweetly sings of love fair Goma
  In some awful light!
Sings to me in plaintive music,
  Melting all the spheres,

While I seem to kiss my Goma
  Through eternal years!
Hark! 'tis the voice of Goma
  Rippling o'er the grave,
As the silver mystic moonlight
  Dances o'er the wave.
Listen to her love eternal
  Breaking through dark death,—
Melting worlds into that heaven
  Which gives her spirit breath.
With my ear against the cold ground,
  So, then, let me die!
Listen! 'tis the soul of Goma,
  Coming unto me!

March 31, 1877.

ALONE.

ONCE, when the world was florescent
  With the roseal smiles of my love,
And the cusp of the saffrony crescent
  Pointed to love-paths above,
I said, "whatever comes to us
  Of danger, thou wilt be near,—
If aught should cloud dark about us,
  My love, thou wilt be fair?"

"As Time, and the worlds we can't measure,
  And seas to our vision look wide,
So, I will be thy fair treasure!"
  Her voice and her eyes replied.

And then in the land of our loving
  All seemed to echo her voice:
The flowerful earth at our wedding
  Shone out of her love-lighted eyes!

But I, who lived in their meaning,
  While holding her head on my breast,
Whispered, My love, art thou dreaming
  A dream of the lingering West?
I see in thy soft eyes a shadow,
  Ah! what can I liken it to?
'Tis like to a terrible sorrow
  Laved in their beautiful blue!

The form of a dove in the twilight,
  Lost on an infinite sea,
Comes over thy innocent spirit,—
  And the stars seem to say, It is I!
Deep in the realms of thy dreaming
  The truth of thy going I see,—
And thine eyes! alas, they art dying,—
  Art filled with my soul's agony,—
Full of a love for my flying
  Alone o'er the world's dreary waves,
Until, in the hibernal glooming
  Of earth, we meet in our graves!

February 11, 1878.

AMIE.

ONCE within a strange, unnatural
  Place I'd never been before,
Where the shadows moved infernal
  O'er a moon-bathed, silent shore,
Many beauties, dear and dreamy,
  Budding with the robes of spring,
Whispered of my gold-haired Amie,
  Tempting me to dream and sing.

Though I'd never seen the dreary
  Desolation 'round me there,
Well I knew the shadows really
  Were no phantoms of the air!
I could feel their weight upon me,
  Even through the dreamy light,
Which so tried to rose my Amie
  'Mid the swarming wings of night!

Much I wondered, being newly
  Come into this land of shade,
Why the shadows never left me,—
  Never once an effort made
To relieve me of their gloomy
  Presence, so that I might prove,
The golden-shaded eyes of Amie
  Looked upon me with their love.

Ah! too soon the shades convinced me
  That for every day to come,
When I wished to find my Amie
  I must first pass by her tomb!
Thus it was the shadows lingered,
  And all the lightsome beams of day
Sank along a West, and quivered
  With their dreaming, far away!

February, 1878.

THE LAW OF LOVE.

HAST thou, my Ada, ever thought
  How wondrously the All
We see within the universe
  Binds our soul, one soul?

Of how the sights that thrill us with
  Their forms and beauty do
Become a part of every thought
  Through which we rapture know?

Come, sit thou here beneath the moon,
  And listen while I tell
How sacred to us love's delight,
  Through wisdom's fairy spell!

Our hearts are in the mighty whole;
  Look up, and in my eyes;
Dost thou not feel thy blood course through
  The grandeur of the skies?

Dost thou not feel me growing near
  With love's sweet eloquence,
Until the stars, as if with tongues,
  Speak out magnificence?

What better proof can reason have
  Of one vast unity?
Where do we better feel us one
  With love and Deity?

Thine eyes, my dearest, speak of germs
  Of worlds for future love;
Our lips now linger with the breath
  Of orbs new-born above!

We truly are within the things
  Which, growing, give us bliss,
And it would seem some star had formed
  To grow from this dear kiss!

How precious, then, our hearts to us,
  When bound by every vow
That God has given unto space,
  That all shall perfect grow!

We as human seem to draw
  The mighty all to us,
So great we feel the growing joy
  Of this our happiness!

Then let the storms of life come on,
  If they will, my own;

Thou shalt hide me in thy hair
  Until their clouds have gone.

Thou shalt be my Naiad, dear,—
  My nymph in time of flood,
Who shall bear me safely through
  To some bird-world of wood!

There is one storm, and only one,
  Whose clouds will never pass,
Until beyond this world we wake
  Together there in space.

But sometimes seems it sweeter, dear,
  Depending on God's care,
Who has ordained us once to die
  That we may meet Him there!

The morning moon's forgotten, love,
  Dim in the Eastern sky;
This life may be remembered then,
  As the pale moon in the day!

THE WOOING.

WHERE tropical shadows lay cool on the yellows
  Of gigantic leaves that shade into green,
Where the fruits are so luscious, and evening so wondrous,
  I told Love to wait him, for near was my queen!

More like a panther I sought me to find her,
  Than like a man I confess me 'twould seem;
Yet all was so royal, so wonderfully loyal,
  To love, that I felt me o'erwhelmed by its dream!

I searched me in fallows, where the birds and the shadows
  Made pictures of color voluptuously rare,
Till my heart that was leaping, beheld her soft sleeping,
  Laid lollingly beautiful in the sweet air!

And then I did hide me, and bid Love decide me,
  Whether I'd ask her at once for my bride;
I sent the dear godling to touch her so sleeping,
  And watched the sweet picture quite near to her side!

He stole up beside her, and laughed as he kissed her
  On her full lips just parted with charms;
She raised herself panting, and looked at him laughing!
  Then opened for Cupid her gold-circled arms!

That night the sky blessed us, all loveliness kissed us!
  Sitting alone beneath the great moon,
Breathing the flowers, and missing the hours,
  While Love sat between us, at last on his throne!

I stole like a panther when I sought to find her;
  Now was I calm like the Orient skies,
And never, no, never did heaven seem nearer,
  Than when I saw all of her down in her eyes!

Who can define them—her eyes, how describe them?
  Unless I would say that they held the *one* soul!—
That their blue sweetness, meant the completeness
  Of life insouled in her hair's aureole!

April, 1879.

LOVE'S MEMORY.

ONCE when all the souls of flowers
Made amorous the austral hours,
And the depths of the Cytherean sky
Sipped the nectarean landscape high
Into its aerial arms for one
Nuptial world of love—the moon,
I met amid a bloomy place,
A maiden who was womanless!
And yet whose eyes will ever stay,
Whose lissome form will ne'er go 'way
From out the life, and soul of me!
Whose beauty makes me shudder now
To think of, when I surely know
Its perfectness from me must go.
When first I looked into her eyes,
As eagles look into the skies,
To mount where'er their wings desire,
Glad and free, with blood afire—
When first, I say, I looked me deep
Down to what my soul would keep
Forever for its joy and life,
I knew not then of pain and strife

To keep the vision from my sight,—
From the rays of memory's light!
My soul enfolded her as though
A camus hid her limbs of snow,
For every charm, and every move
I felt against my heart of love,
As though she panted to be free
To cling the closer unto me!
Oh, lunar eyes of my first-born
Of love for woman; my life; the sun
Around which every thought was wove
In one eternal vestal love!
Oh, cloud-born maiden, dream-born form!
Where in thy beauty hid the charm
That serpents hold for death and pain?
Not in thine eyes was it, my queen;
They were wondrous with the might
Of a Paradisian light!
Where the evilly charm was hid
Is only known unto the dead,—
Who in spirit may discern
Those things that hide them in the urn!

Why turned I on life's path to see
Such after-depths of misery?
The flowers there were sweet, but dangled
Full of evil;—they were fangled
To convince me she was all
That heaven meant for any soul!
Yet to see that midnight orb
Tremble 'round her silken robe,

And shimmer on her veilless bosom,—
Love's pearl-fruit in globous blossom !—
To see the dreamy worlds aboon
Break into lights elysian
In her lashed, voluptuous eyes,
Voiceful with conflicting sighs;
To feel my face where once it wept,
In her hair that with her leapt!
To clasp her being with a sense
Of universal excellence
Of all things humanly divine!
To taste, then drink, of life's best wine,
Pouring from her lips to mine!
To touch her hand and arm and limb,
To drown her fears within my dream,
To bear her velvet, rounded form
Within my arms through calm, and storm,
Through seas and valleys, over plains,
Through sunshine, and the thundering rains,—
Into the sleep of one vast soul,
Where I, exhausted, then would fall!—
To see again, to once more lay
Where once I sank to ecstasy;
If Death now claimed my life the price,
I'd thwart him, though I died, Alice!—
For then I'd be in Paradise!

Back! the thought so heavenly,
So full of music chorally
With all Love's sweetest melody!
The Gorgon truth is in the air,—
The truth of life's long, deep despair!

Then, breathless, let the stars look down
Upon Love's jeweled, broken crown;
See! I spurn its precious pieces!
Look! each jewel blazes, hisses;—
They are flamelets whose hot spell
Fizzles through the earth to hell!

Oh, help me, spirits, now to tear
Her image from the living air!
See! her eyes beneath her hair,
Which shades them as the clouds of morn
Shade the splendor of the sun!
Look, oh, look! can will, or soul
Stand those eyes, so beautiful?
Why, within them now I see
The very soul of her, and I,
Belted with a cestus zone
Carved from out the love-lit moon!
Away! away! I'll have no hand
Raise me to a human land!
Let me in my anguish go
To the garden where the woe
Is in these words—I loved her so!

December 15, 1878.

MEMORIES.

I KNOW a temple where soft harps once mingled
  Their chords of soul, sweet-voiced, and glad;
It stands a ruin, and the owls have singled
  Out its still and melancholy shade.
I took my love one evening to its shadow,
  And there we sat to think of ancient days;
"Would my life of its sad ruin borrow?"
  I asked her as she lingeringly gazed
Through its portal towards the day that, dying,
  Sent its breath dew-ladened to our feet.
"Only Death shall part us," said she, sighing,
  As her lips met mine deliriously sweet!
Alas! that love should linger in those days,
  Complete by reason of life's allotted time;
And yet I seemed to hear those harpers' lays,
  Even while I lived me in its tender dream!
But naught can make me lose the memory
  Of her drooped and dreamful hazel eyes,
As they gazed with pensive melancholy,
  Through the ruined temple towards the skies!

December 16, 1878.

THE SIREN.

ONCE in the gloom of a vernal done day,—
In a love-born goldenly gloom,
I held in my hand the ladied white hand
Of a radious maiden, whose name
Was Beauty alone, and all of its soul
I felt was given to me!
For every red rose that heavily bowed
In the mystic sweet air seemed breathed,
Of the living dear dreams that hung 'round our lips,
Pressed with a timorous soul—
That swam from our eyes in one veilless form
Out to the days of the stars!
I knew me then that life had controlled
The meaning of Being, and Time;
As I laid my lips on her neck, I said,
"Thou art all my love, yes, all!
Look up once more with eyes that defy
These shadows that come with the eve,—
These shadows even of Eve,
Which, 'though tender and love-imbued,
Are shadows still on the world!"

Oh, horror! oh, spirits that promised me love,—
Thou weaklings to cheat me of life!—
The radious maiden looked up to my gaze,
She lifting her beautiful face;
She gazed on my soul with her amber-lit eyes,

And I saw that their beauty was dead!—
Was poisoned with poppies hell-grown!—
For under their lashes, through ravishing shadow,
Deep in their essence of sight,
I saw the sweet godling of love fall, dying,
Down to her heart that was Death!

January 28, 1879.

ELOISE.

LET the farce of life go on,
  The tragedy's to come!
See! they bear a burden slow
  Towards the waiting tomb!
'Tis covered with an ebon cloth
  That catches at the grasses;
There's something 'neath that mask, I say,
  That knows me as it passes!
Ring, ring, toll, toll
  Ye bells the living dread!
I care not for your funeral lay,
  My heart is with the dead!
Take all away,—these bowing forms,
  These garbs of black, these tears;
Why lament and mourn for one
  Who asks not for your prayers?
'Twas me she loved, sweet Eloise!
  'Twas me, and not this crowd
Of mourners draped in melancholy,
  While praising heaven's God!

They think her dead, but I who caught
  Her last sweet breath could tell
A secret so divine that shame
  Would crack that funeral bell!—
A secret held by Love alone,
  Whose revelation rests
With Time, who laid him long ago
  A slave between our breasts!
A secret known but unto souls
  Who care not for earth's death;
I'll whisper it to hearts that grieve,—
  Love *never* parts with breath!—
The body does—the body's dust!—
  I'd lay mine with her own;
Away, away, ye mourners, then,
  The tragedy is on!

January 30, 1879.

DREAMLAND.

I KNOW a palace on a plain,
  Whose windows flame florescent
With roseal lights that, rising, twine
  Out about the crescent.
Like jets of spray from basins grand
  It shapes its towers high,—
As a prismy spirit-land
  Looms amid the sky;
And its beauties sirenize
  The darkest of its groves,

Which on every side there lies,
  Filled with watchful doves;
These in clouds about the door
  Æolian music plead
To every knight, and make him sure
  Within of roses red;
These its queen bequeaths to all,—
  All who come to pay
Homage to the beautiful
  Of carnality!—
Lovely with illecebrous,
  Songful with white arms,
Velvety voluptuous,
  Flammeous with charms
Lissome with a dreaminess,
  Melting with the sky.
Now, 'mid all this pleasantness
  Her lovers, strolling, sigh;
With delights delirious
  Walk they under trees,
Moony with the orb of bliss
  And waving melodies!

But the dwellers, seldom thinking
  Where they really dwell,
Wander till their garden, sinking,
  Brings them to a vale,—
Where a forest is of darkness;
  There their spirits fade
Into paly dreariness,
  Fitted for the dead!

Here the world, all gardenless,
  Is barren 'neath the moon,
For these strollers strolled them only
  In the smiles of one—
Whose uplifted eyes of beauty
  Were but crystal stone!
And the glance, so oft angelic,
  Teased but with the fair,
But really was a look satanic,
  For demons in her hair
Laughed, and ran into her bosom
  After serpents *there*,
Which they'd hold a pinky blossom
  Glamoured by the star!

Now the sorrows ever flapping,
  Like grim birds of prey,
Know the ravish fairy dreaming
  Never will go 'way!
And the palace ruined, lying
  In the land of youth,
Men would build them even dying
  In that wintered South,
If they could, for all deceiving,
  Press again her mouth!

THE VISION.

I ONCE saw a being as fair as the queen
  Of the angels who dwell amid space,—
  Who shine in the Edens of space;
I never expect me to see one again
  So wonderfully beauteous of face!

With a wreath of the lotus-bud was it framed,
  And it seemed to be lacily robed,—
  With fine orris alone was it robed,
For I saw that its body was lissomely limbed
  And its vestal-white breast twin-globed.

I said to my soul it is star-born,—this form;
  I'll worship its angelical eyes,—
  Its radious and venust soft eyes,
For surely to love it there cannot be harm;
  All worship them some Paradise!

Alas! said my soul, I fear it is best
  To leave this sweet being; you know,—
  You surely must perfectly know,
That if you should love it there'd never be rest
  Till it loved in return, and as true!

If once you dreamed that you touched its fair shape,
  If once you dreamed of its eye,—
  Its alluring and almond, dark eye,

And fondled its amber-hued hair in your sleep,
  And it loved you not, you would die!

If once you pressed its nude, rosy mouth,
  And warmed your soul in its sigh,—
  Its panting and musical sigh!
And breathed of the lotus it gave to your youth,
  And it loved you not, you would die!

And what would be death, I whispered my soul,
  To a chance of its love and its breath,—
  To a chance of a life from its breath?
If, wooing, I lost the earth's living all,
  Why, then, would I only ask death!

And so I did woo it,—alas, at what cost!
  The best love of my life it cast,—
  The dreams that were born of it cast
To a world where a wounded life, as a ghost,
  Lives over and over the past!

If only I'd bided by reason alone,
  And not to my glamoured young eyes,—
  My easy believing young eyes,
I'd have let the sweet vision fade 'way as the moon
  Fades in the day-lighted skies!

LOVE AND TIME.

An agéd man sat by the way
Along which all humanity
Loves and sorrows, feels and sighs,
Wins and loses, lives and dies!
The sun was setting, and the West
Whispered to him of life's rest;
The dreamings of his days were o'er;
He'd nothing now to live him for;
For years he'd lived as men will live,
Taking what the world would give,—
Taking this to feed a dream
That ne'er fulfilled it unto him.

"Ah," he murmured, "here comes Time
Up the hill to meet me here,—
Old, old Time, bowed down with care!
Once, when life was young and full
Of all that gladdened youth's fresh soul,
A shadowy shape—so lovable!—
Held to my mouth Love's bubbling cup;
My greedy lips quick drank it up!
The drink looked sweet, it tasted fair;
Then Time danced with us through the air!
For many days it made me strong—
That draught of Love; 'twas like a song
Panting in these veins of mine,
But 'twas poisoned, poisoned wine!

And when I lay me on life's way,
In Love's long dying agony,
That shadow passed me with a smile,
And Time lay down to sleep awhile!"
Here the agéd man with staff
Wrote in the sand upon life's path,
The name of her who wrecked his life,
Who years ago he'd asked a wife;
And Time, who stood now over him,
Said, "Man, that name was but a dream!"
"'Twas but a dream," the agéd life
Answered, "but so filled with strife
That I would not for all men prize
Live o'er again its agonies!"
"Then," said Time, as the sun went down
And left them in the dusk alone,
"Thou hast forgot at last thy youth?
Tell me truly, tell me truth!—
For if it is that thou loves still,
I'll turn me down again the hill."

The mists of night that spread afar
Beyond the land of sun and star—
Were gathering about them there;
"Tell me true," old Time said slow,
"And down the hill of life I'll go!"
With eyes that gazed alone above,
The agéd man said, "Go; if Love
Can send thee whence thou came,
Go down the hill, then, in its name!"

"Ah, mortal, mortal," murmured Time,
"Love is *never* but a dream!

Here upon thy poor dead face
The visions of thy youth I trace;
The passion of thy yearnings stands
Out upon thy shrunken hands,
And even 'round thy helpless arms,
Which so often clasped those charms
In sweet dreamings that by night
Angel-like made thy delight!
Thy silent eyes were trustful eyes,
That feared to close them from the skies,
Lest at last they'd joyous see
A gray-tressed woman come to thee!
Yet, dead mortal, though it seemed
The joys of thy life were dreamed;
Though the beauty of that form
Never nestled to thee warm;—
Though her face, framed with thy hopes,
Never raised it to thy lips
For aught but just a fleet desire
To burn a moment from thy fire!—
I might tell thee—though 'twould be
Nothing *now* to earth and thee—
That I listened long ago
[Our locks were matched as snow to snow]
To a woman's love, which came
In dying whispers of thy name!
In this bosom, scarred and old,
Mortal, there is much, if told,
Could not help such lives as thou,
Because 'tis best that they are so!
Into thy soul for all its gloom
I ne'er expected once to come!—

In the life of Love's great heart
I have *never* taken part;
My duty ends it with the grave,
And leaves to God the souls He gave!"

February 24, 1879.

THE SEA.

WHO by the sea has not heard the bells
Of the sea-maids dreamily ringing,—
Low and tunefully ringing,
As if in a valley far down in the swells
Of the dark, tumbled waves there were singing,
Lone mourners around
A purple, dusk mound,
Where the West was buried with dreaming?

Ah, the sad stories those spiritful waves
Oft moan to the pitying moon,—
The dipping and kissing true moon!
Of fathomless, dark, and awful still graves,
Where maidens lie tangled alone
In long, oozy weed,
While high overhead
Weigh the vast waters which moan!

No wonder the sea is dreary and wide
With the soul's saddest thoughts of the dead,—
With its longings to know of the dead!
And that the bright sky lies down by its side
Its colors of gold, and of red.

Oh, sirens below,
Ring very low!
For every sad toll so dread,
Must float, and float—
Like a death-draped boat,
That tempts me to sail with the dead!
She who, confiding,
Came fatefully loving
Alone this music below,
Of rhythmical tumbling,
Ocean-lone ringing,
Etherous, mystical woe!
Ring your bells softly;
Do not so tempt me
To sink with the golden done day,
For sorrow grows madness,
And earth's dangerous sadness,
Might lure my lone life away!

For, sea-maids, oh, listen, she thought me unloving,—
I who loved her so well!
Cease, then, your ringing, your sad, plaintive ringing,
Or muffle each ocean-voiced bell!

ESTHER.

ESTHER! Esther! cried the stars,
Where art thou hidden in our bowers?
Come forth for one perpetual sphere!
Then came Esther as a tear

Trembles on a happy face;
Panting came she, draped with lace,
Which, when she drew her bosom to,
Fell 'round her feet like woven snow!

Esther! Esther! cried the skies,
All our stars art in thine eyes!
Throw out thine arms; their span shall be
The measure of eternity!—
The measure of a world so bright
That every beam shall be delight!

Ah, stars! ah, skies! said I alone;
Thou hast but born what I would own;
Although I may not, never may,
Take her to me from the sky,
Ever shall her starry form
Shine through all and every storm.

Esther! Esther! world of love!—
Eden's world of joy above!
I'll worship thee, although mid-air;
My love is earthly; I would fear
To ask thee down to where I dwell,
Except thou love me, and could tell
A mutual love; then I should be
Amid the stars, clasped close to thee!

THE END.